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
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Music and Letters

APRIL, 1922

VOLUME III.

NUMBER 2

ARTHUR NIKISCH

ELOQUENT pens have mourned in many languages the loss of Arthur Nikisch. We have in the last few weeks been reminded of the marvellous power of exposing the beauty of any work he touched, of the personal charm and influence over those with whom he came in contact and of the broadness of view which caused him to study and follow the music of many nations and many periods; and it is these qualities which have endeared him to audiences in many countries. But it may not be without interest to examine for a moment the side of him which some of us would venture to assert was the greatest of all—his power as a conductor in the narrowest and most technical sense of the word.

We know that technique in all things is the ability to make use of our means with the least effort and the greatest effect, and here surely Arthur Nikisch was supreme. His loss must seem to other conductors almost comparable to the loss of the dies at the Mint or the destruction of the standard measures at Greenwich; or even worse than this, for the means of reproduction or replacement are more complete in these latter cases. Consciously or unconsciously—and we are inclined to think it was instinct and the effortless outcome of long experience that brought him to this perfection—he always seemed to secure his results in the simplest way possible with the slightest movement and the greatest beauty. I can remember the most thrilling performance of the Brahms C minor Symphony that I have ever heard

—we are not now discussing whether Brahms should be thrilling or not—and at the end, when the orchestra and audience had been worked up to a white heat and the movement had finished in a blaze of triumph, it occurred to me that Nikisch's hand had never been raised higher than the level of his face throughout the whole movement. The long stick held by those tiny fingers almost buried beneath an enormous shirt-cuff had been really covering quite a small circle the whole time, though the range of expression had been so wide; and surely if the arm had ever been stretched to its full length, some catastrophe must have occurred, like an earthquake or the destruction of the building.

He did not spare only his own physique, but also the strain to the forces he controlled. Two interesting examples of this may be quoted. In Amsterdam in 1920 I was present at all the rehearsals before his first concert—he had not been there for 24 years. He began rehearsing the D minor Symphony of Schumann. All was quiet and restful, even cold; a great deal was shown by gesture though always with the utmost restraint, and of real excitement there was none. Suddenly, where the last movement becomes "Schneller" near the end, his wrist seemed to start a dynamo and there was an unexpected dramatic intensity about the two crashes and intervening silences. The second pause in particular seemed endless, when with a whispered "Eins, zwei," he led the basses off into their final passage, and the excitement of those last 26 bars of Presto so roused the orchestra that they got up and cheered. By this time the master was quite calm again and for the rest of the three rehearsals there was no other moment of tension. He had taken the full measure of his orchestra in those few moments and there was no need for anything but quiet work until the concert. A still more remarkable instance of this was at Leeds Festival in 1918. The interest of the chorus at the arrival of the great Nikisch was intense, and he, as usual, perfectly sure of himself, knowing every member of the orchestra and trusting the reputation of the chorus, took a risk that none but he would have taken and started the rehearsal with a work with which he had obviously the very slightest acquaintance—Richard Strauss' *Tailefer*. He went right through the work with hardly a stop and at a very deliberate pace, and I do not think he looked up from the music more than six times. He then played a few passages again and shut up the score. The chorus were obviously in despair, as he had not once given them the slightest "lift"; and a distinguished musician who was sitting next to me said, "Surely to goodness he is not going to leave it in that state?" He then went on to the familiar first act

selection from *Parsifal*, when he was able to get on intimate terms with the chorus, and I am told that the performance of Strauss' battle picture was as full of fire and excitement as anyone could have wished.

At home in Leipzig in his own hall with his own orchestra Nikisch had reduced everything to the lowest possible output of effort. The weekly arrangement there was a private rehearsal on Tuesday evening (to which we students were given cards of admission); the public rehearsal on Wednesday morning, which was filled with the musical people of Leipzig, who used to tell you it was "exactly the same as the concert, only the audiences were much more intelligent"; and the fashionable subscription concert on Thursday evening, where seats and boxes were handed down from father to son and for which it was very difficult to buy a single ticket. It was an accident that took me to the second Gewandhaus concert of the season during which I was a student. I had been to the Wednesday morning rehearsal and had there been disgusted to hear the violins play the opening tune of the slow movement of the Jupiter Symphony in canon *divisi*, the second half playing the tune at a quaver's distance from the first half. Various other things, notably continual exaggerations of expression and an extraordinary looseness of ensemble, were all swallowed by the complacent "musical" audience with complete equanimity. Coming to the conclusion that if Nikisch treated Leipzig audiences like this I preferred to hear him in London, I almost refused the kind offer by a friend of a ticket for the evening concert. However, I went, and was rewarded with one of the most perfect Mozart performances I have ever heard. From then on I went whenever possible to both rehearsals and the concert, and it was often amusing to note how Nikisch would finish the private rehearsal in an hour or so, perhaps not touching a big work like the Schubert C major; how he would then blatantly rehearse the Symphony in front of his Wednesday audience, which happily drank in the absurd *rubatos* and other exaggerations; and how these things would all drop into proportion at the concert and fine performances result, even though one did not perhaps go all the way with the master in his "readings" of Beethoven or the Slavonic—or rather Magyar—passion he infused into Brahms.

Particularly at the time when Nikisch first came to London a great deal was said about his mesmerising the orchestra, and the Press contained quotations from statements of orchestral musicians to the effect that they "felt unlike themselves" when playing under his direction. Such things are difficult to discuss and even more difficult

to gauge, but it may be possible to think of certain causes contributory to this impression. One of our most distinguished orchestral players whom I happened to meet a few minutes after he had finished rehearsing recently with Dr. Strauss said to me, "I have been playing the passages in *Don Juan* and *Till Eulenspiegel* for the first time for many years." The meaning of this was, of course, that although Strauss' beat looked rather wooden, it was in fact most sympathetic and flexible, and he would give a little time wherever it was needed to avoid a scramble; but so little that the ordinary hearer would be unaware of any *rubato*. In things of this kind Nikisch was quite remarkable; his long experience as an orchestral player, coupled with a remarkable sympathy which also showed itself in his conducting of concertos and opera, made it easy for him to do things that would never occur to most people. Another example of this was the way he would let the length of a pause or a *ritardando* depend on the bowing of the string players. Again, his experience helped him to glance always at the right man in the orchestra, however they were grouped and however deeply they were concealed behind a voluminous music stand. The curious slow gaze with which he seemed to take in the whole orchestra at the beginning of most rehearsals and of every concert gave him an opportunity of noticing everything and at the same time of getting on to terms with everyone.

Under such conducting it is easy for players to "feel unlike themselves" and for observers to think they are being mesmerised, but no amount of technical competence will account for the fact, agreed on by everybody, that from the first note of any performance the actual tone of the instruments seemed different from the tone produced by any other conductor. This shows a remarkable personal power, and there are few others of whom it is true. No one will forget the extraordinary way in which he compelled his audience to listen and made concentration child's play from beginning to end of a long concert or opera. This is, of course, a power common to all great artists, although the nature of the attraction varies. I can remember the impression made by Paderewski, who seemed to plunge us into the very presence of Beethoven or Chopin or whoever it might be. Nikisch rather brought us face to face with Nikisch, and it was only when his temperament matched that of the composer that the greatest performances would result. I would almost go so far as to say that there were few works that I would not have felt could have been better given by other conductors, in spite of the marvellous fascination of Nikisch's art.

But whatever he touched was alive and warm, and vitality is the

alpha and omega of executive music. In all Wagner (except perhaps *Die Meistersinger*), often in Mozart and Haydn and always in Weber, his performances were supreme, and another landmark was the Verdi Requiem at Leeds in 1918. Even when we felt we must disagree there was such poetry and beauty, not to mention technical mastery, that we were held spellbound; and now all musicians and music lovers can only mourn together the loss of a great personality, a lovable man and a marvellous artist.

ADRIAN C. BOULT.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S "PASTORAL" SYMPHONY

THERE never was a time when an essentially new musical work did not saddle itself willy-nilly with an implied "damn the consequences" attitude—unless it was that wondrous age in our own country when any decently educated diner-out accepted wholeheartedly at a first hearing the most daring and original expressions of Masters William Byrd and Thomas Weelkes. There must have been a gracious "something" in the English air then, a saving grace that rarely sweetened the atmosphere for Monteverde in Italy, for Bach in Leipzig, for Wagner in Paris, or for Stravinsky in London a year or two ago. To each of these, in his day, the bulk of contemporary opinion has imputed a kind of immoral carelessness of the possible consequences of the effect of his newest work on the ears and minds of his fellow-men. I can easily imagine Monteverde's toying with a reputation of "immorality," and getting some fun out of it; and that our own contemporary may count it a positive virtue to trail his "Sacre du Printemps" across Europe and leave only the dusty wreckage of annihilated principles to inform his enemies and friends of the direction in which he went last. I do not suppose Bach was ignorant of the German equivalent of our verb "to damn"; it is quite certain, however, that he never attributed "consequences" to anything he composed. But the "Sacre" seemed to bring militancy into the foreground.

There was an element of "damn the consequences" about the first performance* of Dr. Vaughan Williams's "Pastoral" Symphony. As a piece of music, as a Symphony, it was bound to encounter rooted notions and prejudices. But it would seem that the first source of friction lay in the term "Pastoral." The common mind will contend with the rarer when such a word is used; if you but prick the multitude with this "pastoral" pin you will awaken it to very definite firmly-held ideas, infinitely various, and individual. Against these a Pastoral Symphony must contend as much in 1922 as in 1808. There will always be many opinions of what a Symphony ought to be like; much more so one that calls itself "Pastoral." Such a work will find itself judged as much by ordinary as by extraordinary standards—by those,

* Under Dr. Adrian Boult's direction, at the Royal Philharmonic Society's Concert on January 26.

for instance, of the man whose ideas for that kind of Symphony would be to put the elements in a devastatingly bad temper, walk under a thundery sky, pick his way by the glare of lightning, goad himself (and us) with hailstones, and finally bury himself in the ruins of a universe; or by William Blake-ish standards (if such there be in music), of an imagination burning itself into a fury of vivid colours, shouting of trees brilliant with the wings of angels, playing the tunes an Ezekiel sang in the fields at Peckham Rye. The one would be a dynamic field-day, approved by half the world; the other, a different species of excitement, with but a small handful of converts. They would be but types of the many standards and beliefs, variously held and invariably defensible. But nearly all, when translated into the language we call "music," would monotonously adopt the child-like policy of realism. The habits of its infancy cling astonishingly to music in its (comparative) old age. Kuhnau's "Biblical Sonatas" and Richard Strauss's "Don Quixote" are points along a line which generations of composers have followed (often in the most distinguished company). There is no fundamental difference between these works. The difficulty, for so many of us, is to discover any compelling necessity for keeping to this sort of realism. For whether it be David pitted against Goliath, or a more modern Carpentier v. Dempsey fight, whether a sling or a windmill, stone or fist, these things, as represented in music, are dull, unreal and farcical. Are thunderstorms much better?

The Vaughan Williams Symphony is not in this long line. He neither depicts nor describes. It is not his concern to "make the universe his box of toys." He builds up a great mood, insistent to an unusual degree, but having in itself far more variety than a merely slight acquaintance with it would suggest. In matter and manner it is intensely personal. Even its detractors (and they may be many) will admit its compelling sense of unity, though they count it death to the work. If you like, it is a frame of mind (not consciously promoted). The country is that; so, too, is any place—village or town. You may not like the Symphony's frame of mind; but there it is, strong and courageous; it is the truth of the work, and out of it would naturally arise whatever risk it has run of being publicly cold-shouldered.

To discuss the "making" of this Symphony and to quote at all usefully are difficult matters. It can be pointed out that it does not add one more to a long list of essays—interesting, but rarely successful—of the continuous-movement form. Its movements are four in number, and separate; but not much farther than that does it go towards resemblance of any other Symphony. The "fifths," which are

amongst the commonest terms in Vaughan Williams's musical speech begin the work; and there could be no plainer hint at that part of the work's texture which can be called harmonic. It is under a wood-wind quaver movement that the first subject moves (coming at the 4th bar):

Ex. 1.



In a work singularly free from deadweight it is not surprising that the quaver-movement, though mainly commissioned for duty in the "background," retains a significance which not even the importance of the definite themes obscure. It has come to stay, more or less, in the scheme of movement, whether in the matter of the harmonic or melodic texture in that scheme. Bits of it are taken up, made into little melodic shapes that move gradually nearer to the front of the scene. This growth in significance of seemingly unimportant details can be traced all through the work. There is a sort of promotion going on all the time, and there seem to be no jealousies. This appears, for instance, fairly early in movement—

Ex. 2



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(the composer calls it a cadence)—and one takes it on its "face value" at a first appearance. It seems almost to obscure the entry of a *cor anglais* figure



that carries one through a short section where the weaving of the theme with itself by one solo instrument after another seems gradually to dismiss the orchestral thought and substitute chamber-music. Nor does a new theme the 'cellos play



destroy momentarily this feeling of chamber-music; but unobtrusively it admits the orchestral force again, and for a while the two forces live in equality, mostly on a simple fare of common chords used very uncommonly. "Tune" never ceases. One after another come tributary themes, short in themselves, and so fashioned as to throw one into doubting their being new; one suspects that, in them, what was a part has become a whole. [One could find an analogy for it somewhere in the Book of Genesis!] Oftentimes the suspicion is ill-founded; yet the fact also is frequent, in all the movements. . . . The chamber-music feeling goes gradually. A fuller statement of the "fifty" quaver-movement, and the first theme's break-up into short *stretti* promise, but do not provide, a climax of some sort. Instead, there is a "Più Mosso" section, in which the first noticeable feature is a solo violin's development of the first theme. A maze of counter-point follows (there is no feeling you will not easily escape from it) using all the themes that have previously enjoyed separate prominence.

Then the "cadence" [in Ex. 2], and one begins to realise its main mission—to be a focus-point, a poise. It is a sort of John the Baptist to the *cor anglais* tune, and less directly to the theme in Ex. 4, which comes again thereabouts. To the end of the movement there are no new themes—only new uses for them, nearly always contrapuntal; all reticent, all gradually receding to allow of the first theme's supremacy (it becomes a ground-bass, with itself for super-structure) in a climax. "Climax," however, is a relative term in this work; this one is marked "f. dolce"; the whole orchestra are in it; and coming as it does after pages of music strangely untouched by "high-lights," it has all the effect of climax. But its ultimate issue restores it to the values of the movement as a whole. It recedes quite swiftly into the "cadence" [Ex. 2] which, strangely inexorable, seems to condition the being of the movement. The *cor anglais* tune ends it.

Colouring the rather common complaint that this Symphony is too monotonously consistent in mood, there has been much talk of a great similarity between the first two movements. Actually, the second movement (*Andantino*) is in certain definite respects very different from the first. "The mood of this Symphony," wrote the composer, "is almost entirely quiet and contemplative." His statement has been too literally believed. You think you have had contemplation in the first movement; and judged by commoner standards you have. But what Vaughan Williams means by "contemplative mood" you will only know when the second is reached. The beginning of it



suggests great distances; it seems to be an easy expression of those vaguer emotions which Fiona Macleod struggled to express in words. (Heaven forbid there should be any suggestion of likeness to "Celtic Twilight" confusions!) When the horn has finished its tune, the music takes us to great heights, emphasizing stillness, remoteness; and the only vehicle for our translation is the six-three chord, played

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in ascent by muted violins over a low held F. The next theme—a long melodic passage beginning thus—



by its origin and likeness to the earlier tune emphasises the prevailing mood. Commoner practice would have brought about a change here. The similarity of contour and a certain monotony of interval within the general lines of his tunes make an easy pretext for those who want to talk about "dullness" and "lack of variety." Nearly always Vaughan Williams has gone to folk-song as a melodic source. Nowhere does he make it plainer than in this work that out of folk-song his idiom—and therefore his inspiration—is chiefly derived. Music of such descent makes an easy target for those who love the excitements of erratic and angular themes. None of the tunes in the Symphony have exciting lines. I recall that a distinguished composer once showed me the profile of Napoleon by drawing a line through the notes of the first subject of Beethoven's Third Symphony. One might get queer caricatures by similarly experimenting on Stravinsky's themes. Vaughan Williams's tunes will not "draw faces," or produce crude pictures of craggy heights. But they will often give you a shape akin to such an outline as the Malvern Hills present when viewed from afar. In the second movement of his "Pastoral" most of the thematic material moves over a restricted space. So much is this true that there is something to wonder at in the cumulative effect he acquires by his use of a simple phrase like this—



It becomes as significant and as useful in the scheme of things as the "cadence" [Ex. 2] does in the first movement; and, as the latter does, brings in its train an important feature—a fanfare-like passage played by a natural E flat trumpet.

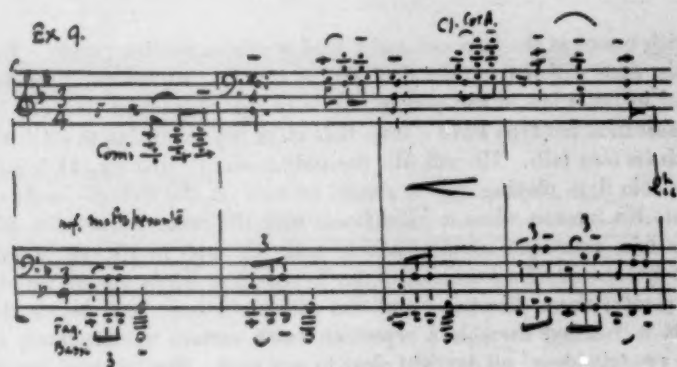


This trumpet "cadenza" cannot be quoted in full here. It finally climbs to a high B flat, against which the whole orchestra burst in in the first of the few *fortissimo* moments in the Symphony. Simple "chords of the sixth"—("poor dead and damned things," as they were described to me by one of the most brilliant of our younger composers four years ago)—again become an important element in the texture of this climax. [The violins and wood-wind play them, over a shifting foundation of common chords so unconnected-seeming with their context, in tonality, that those people who can be "physically pained" by musical sounds must here suffer torment. But it seems to me that these discordances are as right and inevitable in their place here as those in some of Holst's works,* which also "gave pain" to many.] The remoter feeling is quickly restored. In drawing together the threads of the movement the long tune [Ex. 6] is dwelt upon, and yet again the figure in Ex. 7 is herald to the trumpet cadence, now played (shortened and reminiscent-minded) on a natural F horn against another repeated tune [in Ex. 5] on the *cor anglais*, both tunes thrown into relief against slow-shifting common chords in the lower strings. The "dead and damned" chords on the violins, false-related still, climb to a great height. And there they remain to the end of the movement.

* In "The Hymn of Jesus," for instance (at the words, "To you who knock, a door am I"); and constantly in "Neptune," in *The Planets*.

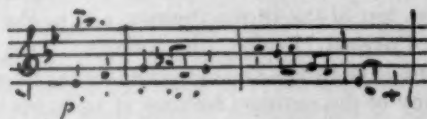
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Of the third movement (*moderato pesante*) the composer has said that it is "of the nature of a slow dance." It seems to me to come much nearer than the rest of the work to being on speaking terms with ordinary man. I am not sure that a peasant could not come straight from his fields to it and feel it to be friendly. That is not to imply that its method or manner is more conventional, but merely that of its six or seven different themes, some there are in the first part—though not, perhaps, the very first—



to which the plain man will always be immediately friendly. This, for instance,

Ex. 10



and this



and even more definitely the following



which comes at the beginning of a kind of trio in quicker *tempo*. The plain man will not be afraid of Ex. 9 and Ex. 10 because they are used in imitation in the earlier phases of this movement (indeed, by constitution his type loves a tune that plays the cat trying to catch up with its own tail). He will like the sudden clarity that Ex. 11 brings—a solo flute playing over a simple *tremolo* on the strings—and not abate his interest when it joins forces with the main theme [Ex. 9]. The trio, concerned almost entirely with the tune in Ex. 12, stands out dynamically from the rest of the Symphony. Here are *fortissimos* in plenty, sheer directness and less subtle rhythms; and before the coda is reached there is a repetition (with certain modifications) of the pre-trio ideas: all daylight clear to any gaze. The trio tune comes again. And here the treatment puts on more and more of individuality, until the only really quick passage in the whole work is reached. It is a *pianissimo* coda, and a climax of lines. It is essentially characteristic of Vaughan Williams's treatment of climax. No other composer of ours relies as much or as successfully on contrapuntal means to moments of great intensity. You will find this true over and over again in his works; in the first movement of the "Sea Symphony," the last of the String Quartet, and in the latter part of "Toward the Unknown Region," for instance. Into the coda of this third movement he throws two new short tunes; he uses imitation, *stretti*, and many of the common features of counterpoint, but all in his own uncommon way. On paper, it looks rather like the lines at Clapham Junction viewed from an aeroplane. In effect, there are perhaps too many co-existent tunes for even an experienced listener, and on that account may come in for some revision.

The fourth and last movement gets back to the predominant mood of contemplation. In a real sense it is a summing up; it is in effect a coda to the rest of the work. "Visible silence" was in one's thoughts in the second movement; here it is as if great distances were overlooked. But analogy is too sharply defined to be really useful here.

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Over a very soft drum-roll (on A) a voice sings an introductory passage, beginning thus :



The remainder of the brief introduction is an anticipation (on muted strings) of the principal theme—



a slow-moving tune, played first by wood-wind and horns, then by the strings. It is succeeded, with some abruptness, by an episode agitated in feeling, sharp with dissonance, dwelling on parts of the last two themes quoted. Between this brief and somewhat unexpected episode and its recurrence there is a calmer period, melodically dominated by the "vocal" theme, given to 'cellos and flutes in turn. The theme is more and more urgently insisted upon, lifting itself on the whole body of strings and the higher wood-wind to a great pitch of intensity—octaves, amazingly bright, untrammelled by harmony for the most part. Out of it a sort of roof is fashioned to overhang the principal subject. Of the main theme itself there is a full statement, and with it a final climax of sound, still polyphonic. The end itself is a gradual elimination of all complexity of line and colour. Only a very soft high A, held by the violins, and under it the voice singing

again the greater part of its introductory theme—that is the end of the Symphony.

A few people there are who regard attempted analysis as attempted murder. It is true that with words one can describe the shape of a tune, but not convey a sense of its practical emotional effect; that texture can be analysed to some extent, but its quality be known only through the living sounds. Yet there is a taint of humbug in the wholesale condemnation of attempts to examine the means by which a composer attains his ends. In the end all works are subjected to analysis; and not without real profit. But knowledge so gained is, or ought to be, only complementary. It is particularly true of this "Pastoral" Symphony that nothing but the hearing it will serve to put you in possession of any real part of it. There is no other way of experiencing its mood, of making up your mind if you can be content with beautiful expressions that are beautiful in their own original mode rather than in your own. Lacking evidence of its sound, you cannot be a judge of its dynamic values; and those values are unusual, and provoking to many. If it were possible to drive home the sense of it all by the hackneyed means of work-a-day analogies, that were an easy task. But a Symphony which is purely musical thought from beginning to end, that shuts itself off from all definite outward images and familiar activities, cannot be so expounded.

In common with all permanently interesting works, this Symphony acknowledges great ancestors; it does not seek to deny the past, though there is a common fallacy that imputes that act of denial to new works that bear the stamp of downright and uncompromising utterance. It is in an atmosphere of fallacies that most works come to their "first performance." We write of their first performance rather than of their tenth. But I believe that in the case of this particular work time will do little to modify early antagonistic opinions. The mood and manner of it are such as to appeal to constitutional likes or dislikes. According as we feel individually, reticence may be the gift of the devil or of the gods, folk-song origin a limitation or an expansion, "fifths" a thorn in the flesh or a blessed relief, common chords an intolerable platitude or a newly-discovered beauty, modal inflection mere mannerism or a world of colour. Vaughan Williams believes in these; they are in the heart and mind of his "Pastoral" Symphony. He has expressed strong beliefs without thought or fear of "consequences." Men have been burnt at the stake for less.

HERBERT HOWELLS.

FALLA IN "ARABIA"

FOREIGN critics, when they write about English music, are apt to talk such nonsense (or so it seems to us) that we often throw the book away in a rage. The remarks which follow will probably have the same effect upon any Spanish musician who may read them.

D. Manuel de Falla came to London last year through the enterprise of Mr. Edward Clark. His ballet, "The Three-Cornered Hat," was well known and was certain to attract the best part of the ballet-audience; his "Nights in the Gardens of Spain" for pianoforte and orchestra won such profuse and unexpected applause when the composer played them that he couldn't make out how those stiff, phlegmatic Englishmen managed to be so genuinely enthusiastic over music, and his own music into the bargain! Falla's work got home to us, not because it was Spanish, but because it was music; the "Noches en los jardines de España" went straight to English musical consciousness because of their passionate beauty and their clearness of design. There was, also, one occasion upon which English music got home to Falla. He had been listening one day to a rather puzzling rehearsal of Vaughan Williams' "Mystical Songs"; the unsuspected brilliance of the sound of sung English being mainly responsible for his surprise. But he sat up with a start at the beginning of "Antiphon," and at a certain place—it is not difficult to guess where it was—he exclaimed "My God!" which was, as a matter of fact, exactly what the choir were singing.

Yet it is improbable that any foreign musician will ever feel the music of Vaughan Williams, or understand why he moves us so, until an essay is written—an essay mainly in music—beginning with "Bushes and Briars" and other modal folk-songs, then with Vaughan Williams' arrangements of them, down to the stuff out of which he made the "London Symphony," "The Lark Ascending" and the new "Pastoral Symphony." So, to get the "feel" of Spanish music, it is useful, and even essential, to try to see it from a Spanish point of view, and to listen to it with ears which are to some extent familiar with those sounds which are never far from the ear of a composer in the South of Spain. I propose, therefore, to remind any

who may care to follow me what the background of music is in which De Falla lives and thinks.

The corner of Spain to which Falla belongs—the old province of Andalucía and more particularly Granada—is different from other parts of Europe, and from other parts of Spain. It could only be described by saying that it is like Mr. Walter de la Mare's "Arabia" come true; and an Englishman to get the full flavour of Falla's music should begin by saying that exquisite poem over to himself. To know the music of "Arabia," he must "descry her gliding streams," he must

Hear her strange lutes on the green banks
Ring loud with the grief and delight
Of the dim-silked, dark-haired musicians
In the brooding silence of night.

That is the background against which music—Falla, Albéniz, Debussy and Domenico Scarlatti—is performed. It is played in gardens on summer nights on a trio of twangling instruments, and is, for a musician, the supreme and unsurpassable moment of a visit to modern Spain.

It was soon after my first meeting with Falla in 1919 that I was able to experience this; and the memory of it has remained with me as one of the most vivid and beautiful which I can ever hope to have. It would take too long to describe that evening again,* and to relate how, at the end of it, when we had gone up into a tower for the sake of the view, we all shouted with one voice for the music of Falla, and in the darkness beneath us the dim musicians played until they could play no more. The performance consisted of a trio of a guitar and two Spanish mandolines (*laud* and *bandurria*) playing arrangements of pianoforte pieces by Albéniz, Barrios, Debussy and De Falla. The musicians had taken their "strange lutes" to a place in the garden which had been carefully chosen before they arrived. It was below the terrace so that they might be hidden from view, and close to a pool so that the utmost resonance might be obtained from the water. The trio of bright, clear-sounding instruments seemed something new in music. They were played so that the intimate structure of the music—its "works," so to speak—were clearly and unmistakably revealed, and the beauty or it might be the inadequacy of the workmanship more easy to recognise. It was as if the music were being held up to the

* I have done so in the chapter on Music in the Gardens of Granada in "A Picture of Modern Spain" (Constable, 1921).

light to see how beautiful it was, or being X-rayed to see what was the matter with it. In the strange delight of that starlit garden one realised how perfectly the sparkling clearness of the plucked instruments was suited to the open air. Yet it was (I felt) by no means a case of romantic *Nachtmusik*: Bach played in a darkened college chapel, or Palestrina sung to the uncertain glimmer of candles and mounting mists of incense. One could think clearly, more clearly than usual, and listen to music as music more easily than ever before—or since. There was nothing hidden or mysterious about it; above all and over all was the clear, tranquil night with the serene and marvellous radiance of the stars.

I was able to make closer acquaintance with the guitar in a house just outside the Alhambra. The player, and the owner of the house, was D. Angel Barrios, one of the two best guitarists in Spain. On hot summer nights Falla and he would sit in the *patio*, where by means of a towel the fountain had been muffled, but not altogether silenced, and the guitar ingeniously transposed into a flat key by the *cejuela* (or *capotasto*) screwed across the end of the finger-board. As autumn came on and Falla was confined to his room, Barrios would come every evening with his guitar; and I learned then that the guitar, as he plays it, is not merely a part of the "national legend," or "one of the signs of national barbarity," as many Spaniards declare, especially when they are not natives of Andalusia. It is a thoroughly serious instrument; and there is as much difference between the man who has worked at it and the man who merely thrums upon it, as there is between Miss Myra Hess and the young lady who can't quite manage "Passing By." Falla has always treated the guitar as a serious instrument; and when the editor of *La Revue Musicale* invited him to write something "pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy," he wrote his "Homenaje" for the guitar, and it was first tried over in his room at one of the meetings I have described. "It's guitar-music, all right," Barrios remarked when he had played it; "but it's not easy, *hombre!*"

Falla believes intensely in the future of the guitar. . . . But at this point some reader will interrupt with a good deal of contempt. "Future? I should have thought it an instrument of the past; one with a past, at all events!" It is true that, with us, the idea of "playing on the Spanish guitar" has somehow acquired a curiously disreputable significance, while the instrument itself is still regarded as a piece of romantic stage furniture. "No," says Falla. "Not at all. Romantic times were exactly those in which the guitar was at its worst; and then, of course, it spread all over Europe. It was made to play the sort of music that other instruments played; but it wasn't

really suitable for nineteenth century music, and so it dropped out. It is coming back again because it is peculiarly adapted for modern music."

He went on to explain why. The six strings of the guitar are tuned in fourths with a third in the middle, between the second (B) string and the third (G), like the first chord of Example 2, which is played entirely on open strings. That instruments tuned in fifths are not particularly apt for modern music is shown by the fact that the technique of the violin has practically stayed still since the days of Paganini. By means of daring *scordature* Paganini was able to do things upon which few modern violinists would venture if they valued their instruments; and the newest violin music is, with few exceptions, new only in the pianoforte or orchestral accompaniment.* Music written since the time of Debussy proves to be more apt for the guitar, and the trio of plucked instruments tuned in fourths, than the music of the last century; and this must be due partly to Debussy's harmonic scheme and his widening of the range of rhythmic and harmonic expression (which came to him from the study of Spanish and oriental music), and partly to the clearness of the texture of his music which was necessary to bring out all its subtleties of rhythm and colour. It is partly due also to the fact that modern composers are growing tired of the smoothness and fulness of masses of strings supported by a rich, round tone in the brass, and are struggling towards something clearer, moving—in fact, in the direction of a band of twangling instruments, like balalaikas!

It is interesting to compare the guitar as Paganini presented it for drawing-room use, in his quartets "dedicâti alle Amatrici":



with the guitar in the hands of quite an ordinary player in Spain. (Example 2.) The only point in the first example is that Paganini has realised the possibilities in the contrast of timbre between the guitar and

* Vaughan Williams, however, in "The Lark Ascending," has written a solo violin part which could be recognised as his, even without hearing the orchestra.

the viola; and the movement, for all its obviousness, must have sounded rather delicious. It would be interesting, too, to hear one of the duets which his contemporary, Mauro Giuliani, wrote for guitar and flute.

The second example:



is the beginning of a popular dance of fairly recent origin, distinguished (like "Though Amaryllis dance in green") for its hesitation between the rhythms of 3/4 and 6/8, *Guajiras* played as anyone might *rasguear* them in Granada.* The notes have been written in the position in which they actually sound, and set out on two staves for the convenience of the reader—and the copyist. *Rasguear* is the method of playing the guitar which we usually call "thrumming," as distinguished from *puntear*, which is playing different notes in succession, as in Examples 1 and 16. The second example is trite enough, perhaps; but that chord made by all the open strings at once has been at the back of the minds of all composers who have worked in Spain, from De Falla to Domenico Scarlatti, though in Scarlatti's day there were only five strings—the five upper ones.

The different kinds of song and dance to be heard in the South of Spain have their own special preludes, with effects of rhythm and harmony (particularly cross accent and false relation) peculiar to each; but a good player, while keeping within the limits, will employ considerable variation, and a master like Barrios can vary his prelude infinitely. Though I heard him day after day for weeks on end, I never grew tired of his playing; and Falla, though he hears him practically all the year round, can always find something to interest him. Even to Falla the guitar is still full of unsuspected effects; while to a mere

* "Encyclopédie de la Musique. Espagne: La Musique populaire," p. 2392 (Paris, 1920).

traveller the prelude to a *Fandango* (Example No. 3)* or a *Malagueña*, is always an electrifying experience. Falla came back to lunch one day, immeasurably delighted to have heard, down in the town of Granada, a very incompetent guitar-player who nevertheless played some music-hall song in an extremely novel and startling way.

This is not the place to go into the meaning and history of the word "flamenco" as applied to songs and dances.† From a musical standpoint, "cante flamenco," which is usually called "cante jondo,"‡ may be said to begin with a guitar prelude something after the manner of Examples 3 and 4. The voice comes in when the singer considers that the prelude has lasted long enough, and sings a long, wavering, semi-oriental melody, accompanied by the guitar and interrupted at certain places by bursts of guitar solo. But the distinguishing feature of *cante jondo* is the characteristic Andalusian cadence: *la, sol, fa, mi*. The melodies of the *Fandango* and all its derivatives (*Malagueñas*, *Rondeñas*, *Granadinas*, etc.), along with *Soleares*, *Polos*, *Seguidillas*, and the rest§ move in a harmonic atmosphere depending upon this cadence,|| always ending on the dominant which the guitar emphasises in a way that leaves no doubt as to the effect intended. The following fragments of the *Soledad* from Falla's opera, "*La Vida Breve*" (Life is short) are a good example; it is a movement entirely in the popular style.

Nº 4. *Vivo, ma non troppo.* "La Vida Breve": SOLEÁ.

Etc. Ending:

Vaya u... nos ojos se...
Pa que pue... da yo mi... rar... los...

* Ocoín, "Cantos Españoles." 3rd Edition. (Malaga, 1906.)

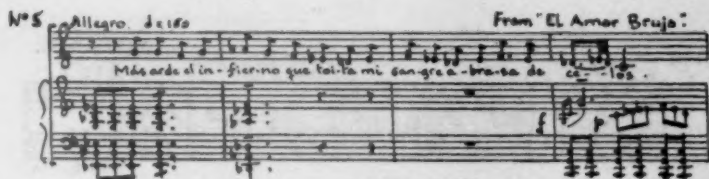
† See "A Picture of Modern Spain," p. 184.

‡ Pronounced "hondo."

§ An explanation of these will be found in the chapter on Spanish popular poetry in "Shelley and Calderon, and other Essays," by S. de Madariaga. (Constable, 1920.)

|| See Pedrell, "Cancionero Musical Popular Español," vol. I., p. 29 (Valls, 1918); and Turina, "Enciclopedia abreviada de Música," vol. I., p. 202 (Madrid, 1917). Turina's little book contains an interesting preface by Falla.

Other instances are to be found in the new ballet, "El Amor Brujo" (Wedded by Witchcraft, example 5) in the seven Spanish popular songs, the "Polo," for instance * (example 6), in "The Three-Cornered Hat" (e.g., the Miller's Dance, example 6a), in the "Noches," and in many other places.



It occurs in the earliest guitar versions of the Spanish *folias* on which Corelli wrote his variations, also, oddly enough, in the Virginal Books; it is suggested by "Green Sleeves," a favourite tune of Shakespeare's,†



and is to be found more than once in Domenico Scarlatti. The example quoted below (No. 7A) is of great interest, because Scarlatti

* Published in *La Revue Musicale*, 2e année, No. 8 (June, 1921).

† "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act ii., Sc. 1, and Act i., Sc. 5. Busoni has made delicious use of this tune in his opera "Turandot."

has followed the characteristic *la, sol, fa, mi*, of Southern Spain with three bars of pure guitar music, showing the "internal pedal" (two notes, in this case) which is so striking in much of Falla's music, and arises from the convenience of the guitar player in keeping one or two fingers down, and so steadying his hand while changing other notes in the chord or arpeggio.



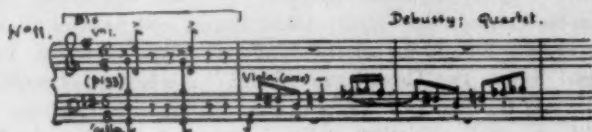
The three bars from a Gavotte of Scarlatti (Example 8), also show the internal pedal, and are clearly suggested by the guitar, as are also Examples 9 and 10.* It is a fascinating occupation, this, of trying to discover Spain in the works of Domenico Scarlatti—as fascinating

* References are to the only complete edition, containing nearly 600 sonatas, edited by Alessandro Longo (Ricordi), who did for Domenico Scarlatti what Dr. Fellowes is doing for English madrigals and lute-music. The influence of native Spanish music upon Scarlatti was first suggested by D. Joaquín Nin.

N.B.—There should be no C in the bass, in the second chord of example 10.

indeed as trying to discover new works of Scarlatti in Spain; but the more one learns both of the one and of the other, the less is one prepared to explain away all the curious and interesting things that may be found in them.

The 11th Example



will be recognised as the beginning of the scherzo of Debussy's quartet, a piece of music which Falla declares to be completely Andaluz in spirit; and the reason when one comes to look at it may be that although the key-signature is G major, the theme apparently centres about the dominant of C minor; it may, in other words, be regarded as being in the Phrygian mode.* There is no definite phrase upon which one can put one's finger, and say: "That is Andaluz," but the Andaluz feeling is certainly there.

These, then, are some of the Southern Spanish qualities which are either exhibited by Falla's music, or help to explain it. They refer to the letter rather than to the spirit; but the letter of the music is, perhaps, all that we can ever understand about it; the spirit must be felt. It is (Falla declares) a hopeless mistake to think that you must understand music in order to enjoy it. Music is not made to be understood, but to be felt. *La música* (he said) *no se hace para que se comprenda, sino para que se sienta.*

Without committing oneself to a rash generalization, one can be certain that this should be the attitude of a foreigner to the music of Spain. What we have to do is to try to feel Spanish music—and, if possible, play it—like a Spanish musician. There are times when I quite agree with those who say that they are tired of "the Spanish idiom," occasions when I hear a capable or even brilliant pianist playing Granádos or Albéniz in London, and, in some curious way, "missing it." They get all the notes, which is by no means an easy thing to do; they pedal and phrase very nicely; they play with a certain sense of design, and get their climaxes in the right place. Yet something is

* Morley's "Hark Alleluia" (English Madrigal School, Vol. III., No. 21) is a beautiful example of Phrygian writing.

wrong; and in Spain sometimes, a wretched pianist playing at a third floor window behind the flower-pots on her balcony, will hold you and keep you standing in the street for so long, that the neighbours begin to think that you are interested in other things than music and have come as a *pretendiente* for the lady's hand.

The feeling for Southern Spanish music lies partly, of course, in a feeling for Southern Spanish rhythms. Albéniz, Granados, Turina, Pérez Casas, Conrado del Campo, Oscar Esplá, and most of all Falla, have an intense feeling for rhythmic effects. The score of Falla's "Noches" and "The Three-cornered Hat" is a texture of conflicting rhythms; and the fact that Falla knows what it is to hear the transparent clearness of a trio of twangling instruments, and to write for it, leads him to handle the orchestra in something of the same clear and transparent way. The trio of guitar, *laud* and *bandurria*, as was suggested before, gives a new idea of music, and suggests that counterpoints both of rhythm and melody can be made to sound, and to tell, in a way which would be impossible on a pianoforte or a string quartet.

Experience with plucked instruments affects the rhythmic sense of a Spanish musician in another way. In England, we all feel the rhythmic effect of chords on the violin. The chords in Bach's sonatas for violin solo and in the best old Italian violin music, are deliberately placed at points where a slight catch in the rhythm is necessary. If you heard anyone trying to whistle Bach's "Chaconne," or the slow movement from Tartini's sonata in G minor (not the "Devil's Trill"), it would sound ridiculous or even unrecognisable unless he made a noise to suggest the *appoggiatura*-effect of those big chords across the strings. It may be said, in fact, that the object of chords on the fiddle is not so much to fill in the harmony or suggest the counterpoint, as to produce a definite effect on the rhythm.

Pianists who are not Spaniards, when they play "Iberia" or the "Goyescas" or Falla's four Spanish Pieces, generally forget that at the back of each composer's mind is a plucked instrument, the chords of which invariably give the effect of an *appoggiatura* and produce a vital throb in the rhythm. The effect of it might be compared with the habit of ladies in some out-of-the-way parts of Spain, who have given up curtsying (to strangers, at any rate); but they do it mentally, and it gets into the rhythm of the first words they say to you.

Falla (whose full name is D. Manuel de Falla y Matheu) was born at Cadiz on the 28th November, 1876. His father was of Valencian extraction. Falla is a Valencian surname; and his forefathers came from Borja (i.e., Borgia) near Gandía. His mother, as the name Matheu would imply, was a native of Catalonia. Falla therefore represents a blend of two different traditions: the imagination, grace and

humour of the Andaluz, and the clear-headedness, subtlety and sense of form of the Mediterranean. His music is superficially Andaluz, but the clarity and directness of his thought is Mediterranean. To anyone from the South of Spain it is immediately intelligible, or at any rate strikes a chord in the memory and connects itself with something which has been heard before. A musician from Barcelona finds that although the turns of phrase belong to that Andaluz manner which is to him something of an exotic, Falla's music has a clearness and precision, a sense of order and arrangement, a reasonableness, which he would call by the expressive word: *seny*. It is (as Professor Santayana would say) both inspiring to the imagination and inevitable to the understanding.

Falla's conversation shows the same double influence. There was an afternoon at Madrid, after a concert-performance of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, during which we had stood up at the back of a box looking over the full score; there were occasions while he was house-hunting in Granada, when we sat drinking coffee and watching the sun set. Falla would launch out into a harangue about music, passionate and yet reasoned, outwardly all excitement and a flood of words but inwardly as reasoned as a musical article in the *Athenæum*. Falla's talk is not easy to follow, either in Spanish or French. One has to see and hear a good deal of him, before getting accustomed to the turn of his expression and the run of his thought, and people who have had only casual conversations with him are apt to carry away a mistaken impression of the man and his aims.

One day at Granada, while we were lunching in the garden together under a quince tree, the conversation turned upon Cadiz, and Falla began to speak of his early life there. Cadiz, he explained, has a long musical tradition, and above all a tradition for private music. In the XVIII. century, when it was still one of the richest cities in the world, Italian opera-companies came regularly from Madrid, and probably also by sea as well, for Cadiz could afford to pay them, and had a public which could appreciate them. People also learnt music by making it at home. They sang Italian chamber-cantatas, they played string trios for two violins and a bass; and the bass, which Corelli and others directed to be played on the bass-viol, arch-lute, or harpsichord, was, one may think, often played on the guitar. Cultivated music was entirely Italian, as it was all over Europe; and even characteristically Spanish things, like Tonadillas, were influenced both in design and in melodic structure by the forms prevailing in Italy. Later in the century Boccherini came to Spain, bringing the fashion for Haydn; and a canon of the church of La Cueva, in the Calle del Rosario at Cadiz, was able to commission Haydn to write his beautiful quartet-interludes to the

"Seven Words from the Cross," which are still performed on Good Friday in the dark, subterranean church, to the uncertain glimmer of a few candles.*

Thirty years ago the custom of making music at home still prevailed in Cadiz; and Falla's earliest musical experiences came from chamber-music. With the exception of "The Seven Words from the Cross," the music played in church was so bad that it left no impression on him; his first public appearance, at the age of nine, was in the church of San Francisco, playing the "Seven Words" as a pianoforte duet with his mother. The chamber-music which he heard, and in which he took part, was generally performed at the house of an amateur 'cellist, "who didn't play very well, *vamos!* but was keen, and got through a lot of music."

Falla's earliest idea of music, then, was derived from a pianoforte trio or quartet, or a small orchestra; and the notion of what can be done with an *orquestilla* is always at the back of his mind. It was accident, perhaps, and the fact that they were performed in small theatres, that caused the earlier versions of his two ballets to be arranged for something like a double quartet. But his interest in the trio of outdoor instruments,† and his scoring of his latest work for an *orquestilla* consisting mainly of wind, may well be traced to his early musical surroundings in Cadiz.

The turning point in Falla's career was, as he always insists, his meeting with Debussy in 1907. It has been suggested that Debussy wrote music which was completely Andaluz in spirit, without necessarily using anything which could be called local colour; and strange as it may seem, it was Debussy who revealed things in the spirit of Andaluz music which had been hidden or not clearly discerned even by Falla, who had been born and bred in Andalucía.

It is interesting to consider for a moment to what parts of Spain some of the better known modern composers belong. Though Andalucía has always been the goal of musicians who have visited Spain, the only modern Spanish composers who are Andaluces by birth are Falla and Turina. Of the rest, Albéniz and Granados were Catalans, and so is Pedrell; Esplá comes from Alicante on the Mediterranean and Pérez Casas from Murcia. Conrado del Campo is a Castilian; while Usandizaga was a Basque, and so are Guridi and Padre Antonio Donostia.

* They are, I believe, also performed in the Cathedral at Cadiz, and at Seville.

† This is not a modern combination. In the Monastery of Guadalupe, in Estremadura, is a picture by Zurbaran (1598-1662) showing St. Jerome tempted by six ladies, two of whom sing, while the others play on the guitar, lute, *bandurria* and harp.

Falla, so far, had expressed the letter rather than the spirit of Southern Spanish music. So, at least, he felt after working with Debussy; and in the "Debussy number" of the *Revue Musicale* (December, 1920) he explained what Debussy had done for Spanish music. The article should be read in his own words, as they were hammered out in French through several autumn mornings at the Alhambra. Debussy, he says, wrote Spanish music without knowing more of Spain—of the actual country, at any rate—than could be seen in a few hours spent at San Sebastian. He knew it, of course, from books, and from songs and dances given by Spanish performers in Paris. Moreover, he was deeply interested in the melodies of liturgic music; and as Spanish popular song has been greatly influenced by the music heard in church, it happened that even in the works of Debussy which were not intended to give a Spanish effect Falla met with the modal writing, together with the cadences, rhythms and ornaments which seemed to bear a close relationship with the natural music of his own country.

Debussy's Andalucía was an Andalucía of dreams, like Mr. de la Mare's *Arabia*; and Falla must have seemed to him like a visitor from his own dreamland. But if Debussy heard from Falla that his dreams had in a sense come true, Falla must have felt that he himself was, as it were, part of Debussy's dream, that he held the keys and knew all the facts of those regions which Debussy knew in imagination. Many of Debussy's works created a marvellous atmosphere of poetry and suggestion; to Falla these came with the force of an *evocación* of his own country and its music, and all his later work may be regarded as an effort to convey this poetry and suggestiveness with the conviction of one who knows that dreams can sometimes come true. So far he had been expressing the letter of Andaluz music; he began to realise how Debussy had managed to convey the spirit.*

It is not easy to find in Falla, as you can in Albéniz, direct traces of Debussy's influence. Some pieces in the "Iberia" of Albéniz seem as if they were entirely pre-Debussy, although the collection was published after Debussy's orchestral suite of the same name. The earliest published compositions of Falla with which I am acquainted date from 1909—the year in which Albéniz died. They include the four "Pièces espagnoles pour le piano" (Durand), three songs to words by Théophile Gautier (Rouart Lerolle: 1910) and the opera *La Vida Breve* (1905). This was produced at Nice in 1913; and has

* A development of the same kind is noticeable in Rimsky-Korsakoff. The "Capriccio Espagnol" is superficially Spanish, but parts of "Scheherazade" profoundly so.

been given in Paris (1913) and Madrid (1915). It is comparatively short—about the length of the operas familiarly known to English singers as "Cav." and "Pag."—and would make a welcome change from either of these. It is rather uncertain in style; but with the orchestra it is said to be extremely effective, and would probably act better than it reads. What particularly give it life are the interludes of Andaluz song and dance, the snatches of melody sung by voices "off," and scenes like that of the *Soleá* partly quoted above (Example 4). The work has a great sense of climax and a great feeling for rhythm, and might be well worth doing here if only it could be "felt" in the right way.

"Andaluza," the last of the four pianoforte pieces mentioned above, is most interesting to study, for it foreshadows Falla's later manner. While in its technique and its difficulties of execution it recalls Domenico Scarlatti, it is thoroughly modern in conception and full of the spirit of Southern Spain. As a kind of trio the composer has introduced a melody suggestive of the *cante jondo* already referred to, and supported it by an "internal pedal" after the manner of Scarlatti.



Debussy's free rhythms, his modes, his bits of melody which end on the dominant, and his passages resembling *cante jondo*, all suggest the atmosphere of the Southern Spanish *Arabia*. But of all his works, that which comes to a Spanish musician most charged with emotion is "La Soirée dans Grenade." The poetry and suggestiveness concentrated in these few pages are overwhelming. This, according to Falla, is the real *Andalucía*; and although there is not a bar which is directly borrowed from Spanish popular music, the whole

piece, down to its smallest details, has the feeling of Spain. The vague, wandering melody (Example 14)



is not really *cante jondo*, but a poetical suggestion of it, an *evocación*. In structure it is pure Debussy; and so are the fragments reminding one of *cante jondo* in the preludes "La Puerta del Vino" (Book II., No. 3) and "La Sérénade interrompue" (Book I., No. 9).



This last prelude is, of course, consciously "Spanish," in the witty style of Gautier's "Voyage." It is full of guitar-effects, one of the guitars, tuned in flats and playing in B flat minor, being interrupted by another thrumming in D major. It is an illustration of what Calderon held to be the eleventh commandment: Thou shalt not interrupt.

The Southern Spanish feeling in the "Soirée" (and also in the "Puerta del Vino") is intensified by the delicious *Tango*—for that is what the *Habanera* practically is—and the rhythm of it holds both these pieces together.



Debussy (Falla concludes) wrote Spanish music, not by using authentic tunes, but by "feeling" them, by realising the foundations on which they rest and conveying the essence of them in music which was all his own. This (he thinks) is the way in which the folk-music of a country is most satisfactorily treated by cultivated musicians. It is true that his own "Seven Spanish Songs" (Eschig) are genuine

Spanish tunes; but their chief interest (as in the folk-songs set by Dr. Vaughan Williams) lies in the accompaniments provided for them, which (in both cases) are entirely suitable to the melodies but at the same time entirely personal to the composers.

The "Nights in the Garden of Spain" (*Noches en los jardines de España*), first performed in 1916, are Falla's most characteristic work. They were played here last summer at Queen's Hall, and also at the Royal College of Music, with the composer at the piano. In form they are superficially a piano concerto in three movements; but in structure they are really three pieces for an orchestra which includes a pianoforte. Their success was immediate and well-deserved; the interest of the themes (in other words, the really good tunes), the beauty and originality of the orchestration, the quiet distinction of Falla's playing, and the passionate seriousness of the whole composition, make it one of the most memorable modern works for pianoforte and orchestra which have been heard. (The score is still unpublished, but is being printed by Messrs. Eschig, Paris.)

Falla's ballet, "The Three-Cornered Hat" (1919), is so well known here that no description is necessary; a pianoforte arrangement has been published by Messrs. Chester. The new ballet, "El Amor Brujo" (best translated, perhaps, as "Wedded by Witchcraft"), has been performed in Spain with a small theatre orchestra. Like "The Three-Cornered Hat," it has been revised more than once, and was only completed in its present form in 1920. (It has lately been published by Chester.) Falla, Bacarizas (the painter) and I spent some time at Granada exploring the Albaicín and the lower slopes of the Sacro Monte, with a view to fixing the scene; but until the ballet is produced in its new form (as it ought to be this summer) I had perhaps better say nothing about it.

Falla's latest work (unpublished) consists of a "Fantasía" for pianoforte (1919), played here privately last summer, and "El Retablo de Maese Pedro" (1921)—the adventure of Master Peter's Puppet Show from the second part of "Don Quixote"—a work for voices, and a small orchestra in which wind instruments predominate. It is to be hoped that Falla's London publisher will recollect that we have an English translation of "Don Quixote," which was made during the lifetime of Cervantes into the conversational English of the time, which was also Shakespeare's. This version is justly considered to rank as an English classic, and ought not to be neglected if an edition of Falla's work is published or performed in this country. It is a thousand pities, also, that the pianoforte version of "The Three-Cornered Hat"

makes no reference to the English translation of that capital story; for the ballet is not really intelligible without it.*

The last work of Falla to be mentioned is the "Homenaje" for guitar, written for the Debussy number of *La Revue Musicale*. It was finished soon after we reached Granada in the autumn of 1920, after a journey on which the hamper with all the music—amongst other things the only fair copy of the score of "The Three-Cornered Hat"—was registered among the baggage of an unknown lady bound for an unknown destination, and only discovered to be on the train with us some hours after we had started, and were crossing the unromantic wastes of La Mancha. It is an extraordinary work (especially when compared with the frivolity of some of the other compositions sent to deck the tomb of Debussy), full of that passionate seriousness which is the great characteristic of Falla's music and of all things which are really and truly Spanish. You can see the affection Falla had for the man, and the way in which, by a recollection of "La Soirée dans Grenade," he tries to forget his grief.



Its grimness is indescribable; its mood is almost that of Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's "Dirge" in the first book of Georgian Poetry:

O vain belief!
O'erweening dreams!
Trust not fond hope,
Nor think that bliss
Which neither seems,
Nor is,
Aught else but grief.

And it is written for that despised instrument, the guitar.

J. B. TREND.

* "The Three-Cornered Hat," translated from the Spanish of Pedro de Alarcón, by Lady Goodenough. (David Nutt, 1905.)
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DÉODAT DE SÉVERAC

THE too early death of this composer, in the spring of 1921, drew little comment from the English musical press. The vanguard of our critics were busy hailing the newest revelations, from Russia and elsewhere; and years had passed since Déodat de Séverac could be reckoned amongst the "ultra-moderns." His loss will be most keenly felt, not by the Athenians of music who are always eager for some new thing, but by those to whom his peculiar range of thought and feeling most appeals. They will not be afraid to lag a few years behind the fashion. For his music, which has strong roots and is close to Nature, inspires a love that is apt to be very constant, and deep rather than wide.

The stamp of regionalism is on his work; but it is regionalism of the best type, which is always ready to transcend itself. His music sets the sun of the Midi shining, even for those who have never been there. Saint-Félix de Caraman, the home of his early days, is in Upper Languedoc. Here he was born in 1873. The springs of his art lay deep in the "Félibrige" country—in his ancestral home, in the rustic life around him, in the history, customs and folk-music of Languedoc. These count for much, of course, in his one opera, *Le Cœur du Moulin*. If we leave this work out of account, and concentrate on his pianoforte music, it is for two very good reasons. His keyboard works are most easily referred to; and they give us the essence of his musical nature almost as wholly as Chopin's give us the essence of his.

He was trained in Paris, at the Schola Cantorum. The strength of his natural gift was proof against its formalism. Or rather, to do justice to M. D'Indy's institution, the training was probably a useful discipline for his native Southern exuberance. Only in one work, his Organ Suite in E minor, is the influence of the Franckian tradition obvious. The Suite is seldom heard in this country; and it suffers as a whole from a certain bleakness. But its delicately-harmonised pastoral movement gives us the real Séverac; so too does the nobly gloomy chorale, with its characteristic modal flavour. The polish of the accomplished student of counterpoint is evident throughout. Bolder iconoclasts than Séverac have admitted the

usefulness of knowing rules before you break them. The influence of the Schola Cantorum underlay the whole of his work; though usually it is buried rather deep, and disguised by the unpolyphonic nature of the pianoforte.

We now glance at other traditional influences, and in so doing dispose of the only other works of the composer which are not quite characteristic. These are his pieces for children, of which the little piano suite *En Vacances* is best known. It opens with an invocation to Schumann; the *Kinderscenen* are clearly its prototype. Here and there Séverac comes near to their cosy sentimentality. On the other hand, in the minuet movement, "Mimi se déguise en marquise," he is as near as he ever was to the old French clavecinistes. Their influence on him, however, was trifling; not nearly so important as their influence on Ravel and Debussy. But again, the lovely polish of the suite, and its economy of effect, are pure Séverac; so is its part-writing, neat and spare, and at times so bold. The overrated but charming number known in England as "The Musical Box" displays his peculiar fondness for "dulcimer" effects in the crystalline upper reaches of the keyboard; while his utmost tenderness is felt in that solemnly beautiful trifle "Toto déguisé en suisse d'église."

We turn to the modern influences through which, as his art developed, he steered his way, catching inspiration from this quarter and that, but always remaining himself. He owes little directly to Debussy. He uses the whole-tone scale when he thinks fit; he makes free with sevenths and ninths; but he does these things in his own way. His sustained, far-flung lines of melody are frankly anti-Debussian. He prefers to sing, rather than to draw, in music; he is more subjective, even in pieces whose picturesque titles might suggest a typically Debussian treatment. He owes more, as he confessed, to Emmanuel Chabrier. He has the same rhythmic *entrain*, the same air of frank enjoyment, in many of his works; while his innate refinement saves him from Chabrier's lapses of taste. He owes much to that splendid pioneer Charles Bordes, who stimulated, in particular, his interest in folk-music; while his friendship with members of the Spanish school—notably with Albeniz—helped him more and more, as time went on, to realise his full individuality.

It was fitting that Séverac's first important pianoforte work, *Le Chant de la Terre* (1908), should be written in his home in Languedoc. This series of pastoral impressions clearly reflects the life he most loved to observe, although it bears no regional label. The sub-title, "Poème géorgique," makes it plain that the starting-point of his thoughts was the yearly round of the processes of country life. These have been described by the Provençal poet Mistral in words probably

known to the composer; they might almost have served as epigraph to his work:

"Each season brought round again its succession of labours. Ploughing, sowing, shearing, mowing, the rearing of silk-worms, the reaping and the threshing, the vintage and the olive-gathering—all these unrolled before my eyes the acts of the majestic drama of country life; eternally hard, but eternally honest, healthy, independent and calm."

Such impressions are presented in a style for which there is perhaps no better epithet than the word "kaleidoscopic," used by Mr. Leigh Henry in his article on Séverac in the *Musical Times* of July, 1919. The breadth and ease of the composer's methods were there contrasted with the frequent laboriousness of Debussy; with his overcharged atmosphere, his undue iteration of descriptive figures. Séverac disposes his musical impressions as in a kaleidoscope. His successive pictures, more idyllic than realistic, and each one perfectly finished in itself, combine in a changing, richly coloured pattern. Episodes, once heard, sometimes recur with new significance. In the *Chant de la Terre*, the unity of the whole impression is enhanced by the use of a motto theme. This is the "earth's song," which opens the work; a melody of Dorian flavour, sounding old as the plains and the hills. It is sparsely harmonised when we first hear it, nothing obscuring its grave, bare lines:



We remember that Nature has stern moods in the plain of Lauragais, in Séverac's part of Languedoc; and noble prospects to the south, with snowy Pyrenees on the horizon.

The section "Le Labour" begins with a slow, gloomy theme, allied to the example quoted. Strange harmonies flit about it, glimpsing into remote keys and intensifying the hard, stern atmosphere. Now it grovels; now it rises, as the rhythm flows more insistently, until it overarches us with a Russian starkness; when suddenly the tension snaps, and a coda full of dreams marked "L'Aimée" brings a quiet end. "Les Semailles," which follows, has again an almost unbroken melodic line, but how different! The piece is a kind of Millet pastoral, hopeless to describe in words. In the radiant key of F sharp major the melody winds its long delicate curves above a smoothly flowing bass. Exquisite use is made of the little figure marked (a) in the quotation, with its careless grace suggestive of scattering seed—



The bell effects also call for mention; Séverac is fond of them. He is not interested in realistic overtones, like Turina, for example, in his "Visille église à Logroño." He keeps his bell tones idyllic, and far distant; he can do wonders with the clear tinkle of a few consecutive fourths, over a murmuring bass figure. But the bells are only one small feature in the exquisite whole of "Les Semailles." With all its delicacy, the piece has a rhythmic freedom and a nobility of line which recall Hugo's "geste auguste du semeur."

Among the other pieces which make up *Le Chant de la Terre* we may notice the curious "La Grêle," Séverac's only attempt at a storm on the pianoforte. The composer has here carried his bareness and economy of effect rather too far for conviction. Parts of the work get home, however; not only through the harsh, insistent rumble

of the bass figure, but through the swaying chords above, which somehow suggest the monotonous rhythmic undertone heard in a heavy downpour, or sheets of rain shifted about by the wind in wide open spaces. In the two concluding numbers, "Les Moissons" and "Le Jour des noces," we hear the first beats—as yet rather short-lived and hesitating—of those dance-rhythms that were to become such a feature of his later works.

The suite *En Languedoc* (1905) shows his powers in fuller measure. These five contrasted impressions are technically more accomplished. The rather awkward sparseness and hollowness of the piano writing, in parts of the previous work, have disappeared; and there is a finer balance between inspiration and execution. The composer is now avowedly singing of his own countryside. He prefaces his work with a line from Mistral—

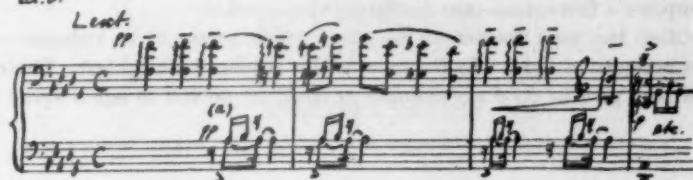
" Cantan que per vautre o Pastre e gent di mas "—

but Englishmen will need rather to remember their Daudet, and not his friend the neglected poet of Provence, to get the right regional background for these pieces. The country of the "Lettres de mon Moulin" will serve, if conjured up in the mind. We must think of a sun-baked land, of wide plains swept at times by gusts of the *mistral*, of farmsteads (*mas*) and windmills on each little height, and a busy pastoral and agricultural people among their gardens and olive-groves and vines.

Through such scenes the composer takes us, objective painting at one point yielding to more subjective emotion at another; as happens continually, and often imperceptibly, in Séverac. Though he paints them with gusto, he stands rather aside from the revels of the country folk, and the multicoloured life of the *mas*. There are delicious impressions of a stream; and one touch of elemental fear in the opening picture "Par le chemin du torrent." The splendid rhythmic study, "A cheval dans la prairie," was conceived in the Landes, and suggests wider plains and vaster horizons than any other of his works. "Sur l'étang, le soir," a curious, rather mannered piece, has more subtle features than its graceful barcarole rhythm: there are strange tremors in it, and cries as of night creatures, and two short bursts of quietly ecstatic chords, of extraordinary beauty. Above all, this suite contains "Coin de cimetière, au printemps," the finest of Séverac's graver pieces. The seriousness which underlay his joy in life, and the hope which underlay his gravity, are here

shown as nowhere else. They are symbolised in the two roots from which the work rises, the mourning melody

Ex. 3.



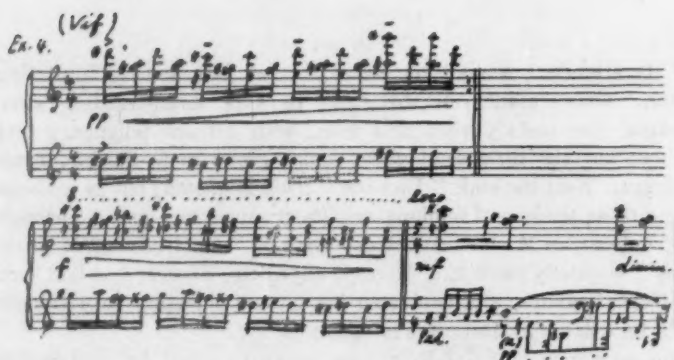
and its attendant semiquaver figure, (a) at first a mere hesitating flutter. Over tollings in the bass, or slow down-treading scale passages, the melody rises and falls, with intense poignancy and dignity; but the little semiquaver figure grows more flowing, more confident. Near the end, "Dies iræ" itself is quoted; but as it sleeps among those tendrils of semiquavers, its grimness has gone. Through all the gloom, as M. Jean Aubry expresses it, "the freshness of living hopes" is quietly exulting. Here, if anywhere, Séverac has laid bare his deeper feelings, and expressed his gravest thoughts on a subject which he was too modest often to approach.

The memories of Saint-Félix now began to count for less to the composer. He had moved, on his marriage, to Céret (Pyénées-Orientales), in the Tech valley, the southernmost valley in France. The sunnier, milder climate, free from the sternness of the plain of Lauragais, was presently reflected in his music. A visit to Banyuls-sur-Mer, on the Mediterranean coast, moved him to compose, and dedicate to Cortot, the brilliant and beautiful impressionistic study, *Baigneuses au soleil* (1909).

Of all Séverac's works this is nearest to Debussy, in method and aim. He abandons, for once, his "suite" form, his kaleidoscopic style, and his long lines of melody. The work is one, self-contained; rather mannered and rather long for its material. The nymphs who play these dazzling watery gambols pose and hesitate a good deal. The work is Debussian in its delighted shading and tinting, suggestive of drawing rather than of music. Not that it ever falls into the narcotic trance that sometimes weighs down the careful pencil of Debussy. All is animation, from the first coy steps of the bathers to the brilliant riot of rhythms and colours eventually worked up. The realist may ask which notes are sunshine, and which notes the splashing and sparkling of the water. Probably the composer could

never have told him. The delicious physical coolness of the piece comes largely from its poise, so nicely is it balanced round a point fairly high in the treble stave. The descents below this point are rare, and finely calculated, while the crystalline upper octaves—the composer's favourites—are dazzlingly displayed.

Often the very essence of Séverac's music seems to be radiance—the radiance of light. In *Baigneuses* this reaches its brightest. These few bars give as good an example as could be quoted in small space:



The passage also shows one of the deft descending figures (a) which afford contrast and help the picturesque illusion by sounding the depths. The harmonies, it will be noticed, are more daring here than in our previous quotations; on harmony, and on rhythm, the composer had in this work to rely more. The finest stroke of harmony is undoubtedly near the end, when the riot of sound has calmed down. A clear call, as it were from the shore



is answered, after two bars of echoes, by



which throws a strange, rich veil over the scene, and prepares us for the soft clash of the final discords which blot the whole picture from view.

In Séverac's last works the regional background has moved definitely across the Spanish frontier. He never leaves the "Félibrige" country, whose southern section, Catalonia, is so closely allied, in language and history, with the Provençal districts of France; but he is now more clearly in sympathy with young Spain in his music. Like Albeniz, he is obsessed with dance rhythms; his art reaches its utmost *entrain* when it sings of the land which is the home of the dance. *Cerdaña* (1911) is once again a suite of impressions. Comparing it with *En Languedoc*, as is natural, we cannot fail to note the stronger, franker rhythms (at their strongest in the "Sardaña" dance sections of "Ménétriers et glaneuses"), also the note of keen exhilaration, and the sense of personal adventure remarked on by Mr. Leigh Henry. The "kaleidoscope" of the former suites has now more to do with the feelings. We seem to be living over again, in an intensely vivid dream, some splendid holiday or excursion. The exultant lilt of the "tartane"—the two-wheeled Catalanian jog-cart—



swings us along until at times, for all the pace and rhythm, we seem half bemused with heat and keen air. So we jog on with Séverac into Puigcerda. Here (in "Les Fêtes") there is great stir and

bustle, and a distinct note of playfulness. A fanfare of Carabiniers is treated with some droll harmonic audacities. Presently Albeniz himself rolls into view, in a *buffo* dance-rhythm, gruffly in the bass. For high spirits no other work of Séverac can equal *Cerdaña*. In the *Revue Musicale* Blanche Selva has told us how for a moment the composer's exhilaration ran away with his sense of proportion and contrast. In this suite, as he first planned it, there was no real point of repose. At her suggestion, he inserted the beautiful "Complainte," with its sad, long-drawn melody of plain-song type, *Les Muletiers devant le Christ de Llivia*. Even so, to English ears, there is hardly sufficient relief from the dance-rhythms, in the work as a whole. There is, of course, no vulgarity; Séverac was incapable of it; but his delicacy and grace are less in evidence than before.

In due time the war cut across the composer's creative life. He received a band appointment, thus missing any great hardships. But almost as soon as peace was signed, his last illness came upon him, when he had several projects on hand and was apparently in full artistic vigour. *Sous les lauriers roses*, his last completed work (1920), continues the Spanish phase of his development. Its sub-title, "Soir de carnaval sur la côte catalane," gives a better notion of its musical content. Festive sounds chase through his mind's ear in a motley rout—town bands, and a "sentimental" melody grafted on to the opening notes of *Baigneuses*; another "*Sardaña*" (a Catalanian dance-measure which clearly fascinated him), a fluent scherzo marked "à la Chabrier," and a cuckoo-motif, playfully intended to evoke "the charming shade of old Daquin." With all this variety the work never gets out of hand; it is a continuous whole, though difficult to "focus" on a first hearing. Themes are repeated, transformed and combined just sufficiently to give it cohesion, and it is finished to the last nail's breadth. Constructively, then, it marks an advance: it is also a fine study in varied rhythms. Blanche Selva tells us that in this work the composer was admittedly relying on rhythm, rather than on harmony, for his effects of colour. He was thus consciously on the road to new developments. To speculate on these, bearing in mind the main features of *Cerdaña* and *Sous les lauriers roses*, is a tempting if vain occupation. Was the serious strain in him dying out, his tenderness, his grace, his more ethereal qualities going with it? Or were these only resting, to revive one day, set off and enriched by his stronger animal vigour, his new spirit of fun and festivity? No one can say.

A short quotation from his last work may be of interest. *Sous les lauriers roses*, with its *insouciance*, its almost rollicking gaiety, is as

yet hardly known in England. We quote its most idyllic dance-motif, the theme of the "Sardaña"—



This undergoes, some pages later, a subtly beautiful transformation—



and soars higher, after a while, over little counterpoints and widely spreading arpeggios of a Chopinesque delicacy. This episode is one of the very few passages in Séverac which sound melancholy. The word does not apply to "Coin de cimetière" or to the "Complainte" in *Cerdaña*. He was no sentimentalist; his last work, as a whole, is the antithesis of the "swan-song" beloved of such people. But as this dance-measure goes drifting as it were over the hills of death, those who love his sunny music feel a catch at the heart.

Those who love it most sincerely will shrink from an exaggerated estimate of his powers. Debussy and Ravel overshadowed him; even less prominent names, such as that of Satie, stand for more important things in the evolution of French music. He was less challenging, less germinal than these, and less productive. The immense fertility and power of his friend Albeniz, the opulent finish of Granados, make his work look slight and small. But his modest place in the history of

music is assured. Already the vital work of Debussy has been seen to shrink in bulk. Very little of Séverac falls short of his ideals. With few traces of labour, and with the most evident sincerity, he says what he has to say. A spare, athletic force underlies his writing, and in his best pieces determines every note; this force lies even at the root of his finish, and of that more baffling quality his refinement. For all his native exuberance, he knows the value of economy. His severe contrapuntal training was always at his service; even on the pianoforte it shows itself from time to time, in some fine moving bass, some keen, telling stroke of part-writing. His nobly-reared arches of melody have often a superb span. Harmony he treated in his own way, finding out the kinds that suited him. Unlike many modern composers, he never trails otiose discords about with him just because he has got into the habit. And so his harmonic high lights, when he uses them, tell and shine; they gild those stretches of his work that most suggest the radiance of light, the exultation of movement; they add zest to his later flights of playfulness; sometimes, as in "Le Labour," they even intensify effects of gloom. When subdued, they help to throw the gradual dusky veil over the close of his works. His modulations, in their easy effortless flow, wonderfully enhance the kaleidoscopic effect of his music. Lastly, all this writing, though inclined to spareness and therefore not so easy to play as it looks, is practicable pianoforte writing; it is within the powers of the reasonably accomplished amateur, or of the best type of virtuoso who loves music better than technical display. The "panthers of the pianoforte" can really do little with it, though they may lay their paws on *Baigneuses* from time to time.

Not only to the musically instructed, but to those who enjoy the art while knowing little about it, Séverac has much to say. He lacks many faults which may annoy such people in modern composers, or bore them in the classics. In his music there is no megalomania, no violent sentiment, no eroticism. There is tenderness, and at times deep solemnity; but that is when he is *impelled* to be serious—not merely because he has got into the way of it (like some great German classics in *their* weaker moments) and wants to preserve his dignity as a composer. There is humour in his music, but not the hard, grinning, cynical kind so much affected by "ultra-moderns" to-day. His humour is festive, or playful; or a gentle "guying," as in the "sentimental" section of *Lauriers* marked "avec un bon mauvais goût." In his music, above all, there is joy—joy in nature, in beauty, in the mere fact of life. The search for literary parallels would carry us far. Good judges have compared him with François Jammes, or with Verlaine at his healthiest, as in *La Bonne Chanson*. Inevitably,

at times, his music recalls the Virgil of the *Georgics*, or Wordsworth at his rare unmoralising best. Into Meredith's *Woods of Westernmain* he has a spiritual right of entry, though the master's conversation—alas!—might scare him out. His work should be listened to in utter simplicity and receptivity of mind. As the sounds of it pass through our inward ear, we of the gloomy North can escape to sunnier, more careless lands. The kaleidoscope unrolls itself; we see wide French plains where horses gallop under a blazing sky, streams glancing and rippling, farms with their pell-mell life and colour, revels of richer-toned gaiety under the sky of Spain, with the beat of dances in the very air. Yes: and a hard earth where man toils with the penalty of Adam upon him, and graves in a churchyard. Through it all, Séverac can revel, sympathise, and console. The dances do not deceive him, nor the graves dismay him. He has a deep, abiding conviction that it is all worth while; an ultimate note of mysticism felt in the poets with whom we have compared him. And, like Browning's musician, he just "knows"; he does not "reason," or try to explain.

W. WRIGHT ROBERTS.

CATHEDRAL MUSIC

THE financial difficulties of the present time have affected many interests in the country: it is clear from various indications that the music in our Cathedrals has received a serious blow owing to this cause. Many Cathedrals and other Churches in which hitherto Morning and Evening Prayer had been sung daily from time immemorial have reduced their daily musical services to one, and it is clear that there is great difficulty in all Cathedrals in maintaining the old standard. I do not wish in the present article to discuss the ecclesiastical importance of such changes as these or the relation of them to the statutes of the several Cathedrals. I want rather to draw attention to the very great value of Cathedral music from the point of view of the art of music.

English Cathedral music has a continuous tradition. The relation of the Church of England to art is very peculiar. At the Reformation it found itself in possession of a large number of buildings—Cathedrals, Abbey Churches, Parish Churches—of priceless value to us now. The Cathedrals and Parish Churches, and some of the Churches connected with the Regular and Secular Orders, were preserved. Many of the Abbey Churches—Fountains, Rievaulx, Osney, etc.—became interesting ruins or disappeared. Some interesting Churches—S. John Evangelist, Leeds, Berwick-on-Tweed, etc.—belong to the seventeenth century, and there is the great period of Christopher Wren. But there is an immense and doleful gap between Wren and the Gothic Revival, and an outsider may venture to ask whether the derivative element does not unduly prevail in Church architecture at the present moment. There is no continuous tradition.

The English Church has largely denied itself the help of great painting. Many of the City Churches had painted altar-pieces—some of which we owe to Benjamin West, P.R.A. But it is probable that Holman Hunt's "Light of the World" in Keble Chapel, Watt's two pictures in S. Paul's, and his "Sir Galahad" in Eton Chapel, represent a renewed connection between the English Church and pictorial art. Photographs and Arundel reprints and other such things are finding their way into Churches, but there has been a long and

complete break in the traditional connection of the Church with this kind of art.

Good hymns may be found at every stage in the history of the English Church; but religious poetry, which is first-rate as poetry, is not common at all, and a careful study of any large hymn book will show how small a space it occupies in hymnody.

But the Cathedrals have kept in being a continuous tradition of English music. The period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth suspended their activities, no doubt, for a time, and the Restoration brought in new and foreign influences. It remains true, however, that through the early Stuart and Tudor periods we pass, through the Reformation, to the ancient music of the Church. The Church of England stands in this relation to music alone of all the arts.

It must be admitted that the particular type of music now in view is very limited in its resources. It contemplates at the most a small choir, capable of solos, and of choral work in as many as eight parts, either unaccompanied or with organ accompaniment only. It is further restricted by the exigencies of the Services, by limits in the matter of time and so on. It is separate and distinctive, but not so completely separate as plain-song became after the diatonic scale displaced the variety of the modes, and it has shown itself capable of being influenced, not always to its advantage, by current secular styles. This last feature is not wholly to be condemned. It is true that Handel exercised a baleful influence upon Crotch, and Spohr and Mendelssohn upon later musicians: but it is undesirable that Church music should not follow to some extent the movements of the art as a whole; there is no reason why Church composers should be like writers of Latin verses—following forms that are not of their age or nation. S. S. Wesley was right when he said in his Preface to his Service in E that the style of Tallis in D “falls short of what ought to be and may be accomplished” in the way of giving musical expression to the Canticles. There is also a reserve implied in the very idea of religious music, which combines with the limitations mentioned above to give its peculiar character to Church music. If these conditions are preserved there is no reason for limiting the expression of religious ideas to a single idiom.

There has, then, been a continuous tradition of English Church music, and it has connected itself naturally with the Cathedrals; further, the tradition of daily Service has been preserved. It must be admitted that there is something accidental about this tradition. It cannot be maintained that it is due to any passionate sense of the value of music in the Cathedral dignitaries: they have acquiesced in it, because it was there, rather than regarded it as an essential element in the work of a Cathedral. There have been some musicians amongst

those responsible for the Cathedrals. There are Dean Aldrich, of Christ Church, Oxford; Creighton, Canon of Wells; Turton, Bishop of Ely. But in the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth it was the actual existence of the tradition rather than any sense of the value of it which kept it going. Music was regarded as an eccentricity, if not worse, in itself—a thing, an interest in which it would be rather damaging to confess, but which had its place in the constitution of Cathedrals and could not be helped.* Thus the Cathedral tradition, though continuous, has been somewhat starved: but it is there: Stanford is in line with Tallis and Byrd. We often discuss the question whether the English are a musical nation—so anxiously that one is sometimes tempted to think there is a serious doubt as to the answer: no one argues the point in regard to Germany or Italy: but *if* we are, one of the counts in our favour will be the continuous tradition of music in the Cathedrals.

The Cathedral tradition, moreover, has afforded an admirable training to all those who are concerned in it. Anyone who has had to do with a Cathedral knows this. A Cathedral choir sings without a conductor: the organist is usually secreted in some pit or crow's-nest out of sight and almost out of hearing. Choir and organ keep together on the basis of real musicianship. So boys and men are alert and resourceful. If anything goes wrong they will pull themselves together almost before anyone has discovered the misfortune. The leading boys bear an immense responsibility and hardly ever fail to do what is required of them. So a good Cathedral choir can adventure itself upon so complicated a work as S. Wesley's "*Exultate Deo*" with every hope of getting to the end without loss of pitch or confusion of any sort.

I should like, in passing, to say a word here as to the value of choir schools when attached to a Cathedral. It is easy to object that the time occupied in singing the Services and practice breaks in seriously upon the ordinary education of the boys. There is, of course, some truth in this: but it is not the whole truth. My experience, and I find others agreeing with me, is that the training in music, together with the responsibility of performing the Services, is of the utmost value to the boys in mind and character. They are, of course,

* This state of things can be seen in operation in the Memoir of the late Sir F. Ouseley: and I think I may claim to have experienced one of the last manifestations of it. A few days before war was declared in 1914 I was asked to give an address to one of the many conferences which now occupy Oxford in the Long Vacation in a college chapel. I went with one of my colleagues in the Governing Body of Ch. Ch. When we arrived at the college gate, the Head of the College met us, and said that a difficulty had arisen, as the organist had not arrived. I said this did not matter: my friend would take the Service and I would play the organ. "My dear Mr. Vice-Chancellor," said the Head, "this would be most improper."

musically inclined or they would not be in the choir at all, and they are qualified, therefore, to take an interest and appreciate the music : but they have this great advantage that music is, of necessity, taught them seriously and scientifically, not merely as a mode of releasing physical energy or occupying spare time, and so it has with them its natural effect in the development of mind and character.

In the constitution of the old Cathedrals, I believe that the Precentor was as a rule one of the great dignitaries. At York the Dean is Precentor, at S. Paul's and some other Cathedrals one of the Canons, in the majority of cases the Precentor is one of the minor Canons. The organist is a full Canon at Wells* : but, so far as I am aware, nowhere else. The value of the old position of the Precentor was that in the loftiest Chapter circles the very important element of worship which music supplies had a definite and assured place. Whether the Cathedrals always secured a trained musician for this post it is impossible now to say. However this may be, I think the principle by which music had a recognised place among the most important interests of the Chapters requires to be revived. It is probably impossible now, whatever may have happened in the Middle Ages, to insist that the Dean or one of the Canons should be a trained musician : but I think that at the present time, when the whole question of Cathedral music is under discussion, it is important to consider the position of the organist. I am not myself inclined to solve the problem by means of priest-organists, though I am aware there is a body of opinion in favour of this plan. Looking back on my experience as Dean, it has seemed to me that decisions upon the ecclesiastical and the musical side of the Services are more conveniently separated. I knew, or seemed to myself to know, what I wanted from the ecclesiastical side, but for the other I wanted the opinion of an expert musician. It would increase my confidence in what he said if I felt sure that he was not trying to settle my problem as well as his own. This view may be peculiar to myself, and others may well think differently. But I do not think there can be much difference of opinion as to the position of Cathedral organists. They surely ought to be recognised as expert authorities in their own line, and should control the musical side of the Services much more fully than they do. This is, of course, a highly controversial statement. It is urged that they are sometimes without interest in anything but the display of their art, and are attached, as it were, accidentally to Church worship. If that is so, they are not good Church musicians and should not have been appointed. The same reply meets the objection that they are often

* I base this statement on the list in Crockford.

more keenly interested in secular music than in that of the Church : again, they ought not, if that is so, to be Church musicians. The Church music is in real fact a branch of its own : it is not an appanage of the concert-hall or the opera-house : and where, as in England, it has a long and noble history it is worthy of special devotion and study. At the present time, as was said at the beginning, Cathedral music is on its trial, and the question is whether it justifies the expense and trouble of retaining it. I have urged its intrinsic excellence and its value in training. That is, its real claim turns on its being the best thing of its kind. If the Cathedral Church of a diocese displays in its Services the ideal of what such Services may be, it will raise the standard of musical appreciation throughout the whole diocese and enhance the spiritual value of music for all who hear it. But it will do none of this unless it is good—as music : mean music poorly performed is of no use to any human being. It is, it cannot be denied, a laborious and expensive business to attain this ideal : and it cannot be attained at all unless the musical policy and practice of a Cathedral are guided by a fully trained and expert Church musician.

THOMAS RIPON.

Correspondence is invited on the subject of this and of the following article.
—[Ed.]

CHURCH MUSIC.

It is only too well known that it is difficult to interfere with the choice or the performance of music in Churches. Many dioceses have formed committees to deal with Church music and it is not claimed for the Diocese of Winchester that it has embarked on any new policy, but it may be thought worth while to state what has happened already.

In 1920 the Bishop of Winchester nominated a small committee, consisting of clergy and laity in nearly equal numbers and two ladies, to consider the problem of improving the Church music in the diocese. This committee met several times and had a general discussion on principles and on what could be done in an active manner. The two schools of thought, if one might call them so, were the Hymn Festival School and the Organists' Instruction School. The principles that guide the Hymn Festival School are too well known to merit discussion here. The instructional idea had some new points: it was claimed that by collecting a large number of organists together—with an eye upon the smaller country parishes—for a week-end, much might be done to open the eyes of the teachers of music in the parishes—for such, indeed, the organists are—to new ideas and new methods. On the other side it was held that nothing could be learned in a week-end. It was conceded on both sides that the drawback to the Hymn Festival is that an outsider comes down to create enthusiasm and then goes away and leaves the permanent organist to carry on, with no hope of maintaining the enthusiasm at that heat. Therefore the claim of the Instructionists seemed good, that they intended to teach the teacher and let him deal with his own forces as he found them.

The Instructionists were given their chance and a scheme was made of inviting Church Councils to send their organists to Farnham for a week-end in August, 1920. About 70 organists arrived, women and men, representing every kind of church and organ from the four-manual electric organ to the harmonium in the mission room. Lectures were arranged on specific subjects and some demonstrations by a small choir, but the interest lay very largely in the discussions and questions after the lectures. These showed the committee their real difficulties, firstly psychological, that a certain class of musician was not receptive to new ideas, and secondly material, that the diversity of equipment and ambitions necessitated different treatment for

different kinds of Churches. The week-end was, no doubt, a very great success. At the very least it had shown the diocese that their organists, however humble, were considered to be important servants of the Church; and, even if the lectures were useless, the organists benefited vastly by conversation with each other and that encouraging game known as "swapping lies" about their tasks.

One young organist said meditatively, "I wish my Vicar was here." And that chance remark set off a new train of thought in the minds of the committee, which was soon translated into action, and a smaller local conference was called of clergy and organists to discuss the larger question of the purpose and position of music in Church, and the smaller but important questions as to the guiding principles in performance. This conference was markedly successful in showing that the parson and the organist were not like the lion and the lamb, but that they ought to, and that they can and will, eat straw together like the ox.

The committee arranged a summer school on a larger scale, but uncontrollable events forced them to abandon it. In its stead they resolved to meet themselves for two days and, in view of their experiences during two years, to have discussions to see how far they could arrive at a common mind and a common outlook. This was of great importance if the work was to succeed as a corporate work and to carry with it the general support of the musicians in the diocese.

The first plank to be nailed in the platform was that the committee stood for music in the service of the Church of every kind and did not intend to make itself a lever for propaganda of any party kind. Next, that it did not intend to recommend only the use of new hymn-books and new music, but rather to show first how to use the existing books and music, and, as a corollary to this, that it intended to advise Churches how to achieve the aims and ambitions they had conceived in the best manner possible, not to recommend to them to have all the same ambition. In short, the committee said "Tell us what you want to do and we will show you how to do it," rather than "We will tell you what you ought to want to do."

Selected lists of hymns for the month have been published in the *Diocesan Chronicle* and have been found useful to many parishes besides those which adopted them wholly.

Various suggestions have been made for further activities, the publication of special supplements of selected hymns for Church or Sunday School use, of music for the sung Communion Service other than Marbecke, and no doubt—given time and money—these suggestions would be adopted. The geography of the Winchester Diocese makes all administration difficult, and in a more centralised diocese much

would be easy which is now impossible. The smaller the area the more intense can be the cultivation.

The clergy in country parishes have many difficulties to face. They are bound by custom to a surpliced choir in the chancel of men and boys. The chancel is seldom large enough to contain a good-sized choir, and it is very often out of touch with the organ. And, in any case, the music is at the wrong end of the Church to promote good congregational singing. The congregation must be *driven* to sing, in fact, not *led*. Again, in a village women's voices must be used if the choir is to succeed, and custom will not allow them seats in the choir itself.

There is, again, this difficulty—the choir wants to sing *as a choir*, or it will lose its prestige and dwindle away; while the congregation want to sing *as a congregation* also. How are these two things to be reconciled? Various ideas at once occur—antiphonal psalms, canticles specially written with a simple and recurring tune for the people, hymns with descants for the choir, *faux bourdon* to plain song, and so on. All these means have to be explained and made accessible to country clergy and organists, who are often out of touch with music.

Thus far merely the outline of the committee's activity and policy has been given. If I may be forgiven, I should like to add some of my personal convictions and hopes. All hopes of reform in village and country town Church music must be based on the work that has been done already for secular music by the competition festival movement. It is no longer possible to say of any proper and respectable village or town that it cannot raise a conductor or a choir of any sort of merit. It has been proved over and over again that it can be done. Nor is it likely to be true that the majority of the singers in the village choir will not be members of the Church of England. What has been done for the village concert can be done for the village Church once the general will has been shown. The surpliced choir in the chancel is the root of all the difficulties. The west-end gallery of pre-Oxford Movement days may have been abused, and the deportment of the choir and musicians may not always have been seemly. I am inclined to think that the matters of deportment and reverent behaviour have been invested with too much importance in our minds, for they are after all only the outside of the cup and platter.

The clergy of small parishes are naturally timid and dislike innovations because they fear that someone else will dislike them and make trouble, or because they are temperamentally better fitted to follow a movement than to lead one. The days of Parish Church Councils do not make this kind of reform easier, as most councils consist of the people in the parish who are by conviction opposed to any kind of

change in the services which they themselves endured in youth, and, as far as my experience on a Church Council runs, they wish to cut down every possible expenditure that is not directly connected with their own personal comfort when in Church. To reorganise a service in the manner I have indicated will mean changes for certain, and probably expense. Neither of these can be incurred without hostility from some members of the congregation, and yet no betterment of Church music is possible without them.

If no choir can be formed at all out of the village, and if the surpliced choir is knocked on the head, there remains always the congregation, who can sing if they feel that they, and they only, are responsible for it. The most intelligent singing I have yet heard was in a small village Mission Church where there was no choir, a harmonium, and a congregation who were ready to help because they liked singing. A Church in London—the West End, too—manages its music on those lines, relying on a semi-permanent body of helpers who sit together at the back of the Church.

What is wanted, in my view, is the formation in small areas, arch-deaconries or rural deaneries, of committees or associations to give mutual confidence in attacking these problems, and to give some help or instruction where it is wanted. The average village organist wants to learn and is ready to be taught. A diocesan committee could well make itself useful by the publication of lists of suitable music and by concerning itself with larger issues, of which, let us hope, the old-fashioned diocesan choir festival will not be one. Village choirs were made to learn music which they could not adequately perform alone, and when it had been learnt it had to be performed or the work was considered wasted.

A valuable piece of work could be done if keen amateurs of music would take on the work of instructing village congregations. All the qualities of tact, enthusiasm and knowledge are required, the two former in particular, and that is why I think an amateur is more likely to succeed than a professional.

I must add, in conclusion, that the members of the Winchester Diocesan Church Music Committee must not be considered to agree with anything I have written here, as this article has been written unofficially and has not been submitted to them, and therefore must be treated as an *obiter dictum*.

STEUART WILSON.

THE PERSONAL NOTE IN MUSICAL CRITICISM

I BEGAN a recent little book with a plea for a more personal way of writing about music. That voiced an old-standing dissatisfaction of mine. When one gets keen on music one naturally turns with some eagerness to all the writing one can get hold of bearing upon it. At first a great deal of interest can be taken in technical and biographical material which is new to one; but presently one begins to feel that nearly all the writing is beside the point. It's interesting because it is *beside* it; but it is not, or hardly ever for more than a moment, on it. Your newcomer reads it, perhaps even avidly, but with the same dispersed avidity which the news-editor caters for, when he evolves two columns of collateral material around the laconic message on his table, "*Titanic* sinking." We consume those two columns greedily, though they tell us nothing new, or nothing worth knowing.

I am perfectly sure that those who supply the demand for musical literature must sometimes be conscious of writing round and round the mulberry bush, and be convicted within themselves of shirking the effort and the risks which an attempt to find the revealing phrase would involve. Musical criticism (I am not speaking in this article of criticism of performance) so often fails to get past the prolegomena of its job. Frequently, reading study or essay, I have wanted to say Coward! Slacker! As technician, or historian or biographer the critic can go on laying brick to brick, but where the real business of his art begins, where there is need for him to search into himself, and think pretty hard and feel pretty hard, where there is need, in short, for that creative effort there must be in all good criticism, we may find a few poor guarded generalities, or absolutely nothing at all.

Sometimes, perhaps, the effort is not so much pusillanimously shirked as deliberately disdained. It may be denied that it is possible to speak profitably of the real stuff of music. The pretentious and dreary gush of sentimentalists is pointed to as an awful warning, from which the musician turns and flies. Whatever the reason, the deficiency of musical criticism becomes conspicuous when we compare it with literary or plastic art criticism, and think of such names as Sainte-Beuve, Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Pater and a host of others, and have not one name worthy to be set beside them—not one who has done great work in unifying and clarifying musical values, and bringing them into relation to life and thought.

I have lifted a view of the ultimate task of criticism, which is a bigger and remoter object of contemplation than the immediate and thoroughly practical purpose of this article requires. What we want is more contributions, if only of a fragmentary sort, that go to the heart of things. To get them we must start by recognising that their subject-matter is not music, but music in action—in interaction with the human spirit. There are two parties to it; you—the hearer—are a constituent of the living reality. That is to say, profitable criticism must be frankly personal and self-revealing.

As an extreme assertion of this, I would repeat my suggestion that a musician might be more illuminating on music if he deliberately set out to write about himself.* “We might find that the real values of music are not after all so hopelessly incommunicable and incommensurable. Of course they slip through the fingers in any analysis of the thing in itself, but in the reactions of a human spirit to it fractions of them are caught and fixed; and in such data, if anywhere, they must be studied.”† On these lines I attempted to interpret the recording tape of an outsider’s experience of music, and to run my own short and feeble little thread through the material. I only hope that someone more largely equipped may be led to explore the possibility of finding within himself a unifying principle of a more vital sort than the vertebræ of books which discuss music chronologically, or round its significance for form. I strongly believe there are big possibilities here in the way of pulling the material together and giving a connected view of the whole field of music.

Still, this represents an experiment, a challenge. I don’t suggest that all criticism should be swung on to such an entirely individualistic line of approach. I don’t for a minute deny that the old standard methods can be made the vehicle for thoroughly sincere and free valuations. I would instance Ernest Walker’s *History of Music in England* as a book which, though strictly a systematic survey, gives one the feeling that it is concerned with music in action; one feels that the continuity of it lies not so much in the chronological sequence as in the personal touchstone to which the music is brought. A history or a biography or a study of some movement or aspect of music naturally hopes to express a certain amount of objective and universal truth; but it may refuse to aim directly at this, and rather seek the objective through the subjective, and care nothing for a universality that is not individually real. Such a book, by as much as it is less “safe” and “authoritative” and “standard,” by so much the more may it contain the genuine stuff of criticism. And

* Compare Anatole France: “Apropos of Shakespeare, I will talk of myself.”

† “A Musical Pilgrim’s Progress.”

there are some writers, of course, who both have the ability and have not shirked the risk and the greater creative effort. From this point of view I find myself able to pick up the volumes of a series of books by different writers and say "This is good." "This is worthless." The line is remarkably definite through all the literature of music.

However, when this has been said, I come to the query that is most on my mind in writing this article:—Whether the most important and most valuable criticism of to-day is really *able* to find utterance along the channels at present offered to it? I see reason for believing that much of it remains underground, because it is unable to find place or occasion for public expression. The best criticism is going on all the time out of sight, in private talk and letters. Musical people would hardly bother to write in their diary or say to one another the sort of thing that fills the printed page. On the other hand, what they do so say and write rarely finds its way into print. Something in the conditions and conventions of criticism, some restraint or lack of opportunity in the available channels of utterance, deprives us of what would be much the most valuable contributions towards a common body of truth.

I am allowed to take an illustration from what seems to me the very last quarter in which one could hope to find justification for this description of the state of affairs. Mr. Ernest Newman public-spiritedly lets me quote a passage from a private letter of his:—

"whereas [after some remarks on Bach], I am sorry to say, something of Beethoven's appeal is going. This, of course, is a *very* general statement: Beethoven as a whole is still great for me: I only mean that here and there I am horrified by something like commonplace and sentimentality in him. He *yearned* too much now and then for my taste. That upward-striving way of his melodies, to which you drew attention, is often unpleasant to me: it's a sign of weakness of the spirit. I don't like the self-pity of some of these passages."

With the particular facts of feeling thus revealed we are not here concerned, except to note that, coming from such a quarter, they are certainly of the greatest interest and highest importance. I only give the quotation for the almost irresistible suggestion it carries that there are sub-currents of thought which do not find their way to the printed page. Mr. Newman has established a freedom and reality of his own which, taken with his other qualities, are exceptional in present-day criticism; I couldn't possibly go as far as to assert that he would never have published this judgment. But, at any rate, no one can help realising that, as things are, it is just the sort of profoundly personal

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thought which might remain unuttered while a continuous stream of first-class writing about music was flowing out, in newspaper articles, in essays, and in books. Every available channel of criticism might be in use—yes, even a book on Beethoven might be written—without bringing it up to the light. I make my point sufficiently if you admit the possibility of this. It is an arresting consideration if those who are doing the best work in making musical opinion and feeling articulate are under conditions which do not draw out inevitably the most valuable contributions they could make, and if they might conceivably be left, after a lifetime of activity, with their most mature and most deeply-felt judgments unspoken.

I myself, and, I expect, most of those who read these words, would feel that this illustration is only a snap-shot glimpse of a state of affairs that is very general. The best criticism is going on underground all the time. I am very far from moving in high musical circles, but from a few contacts latterly here and there with scholar, critic, composer, amateur of the more thoughtful type, or artist with something more than a repertory interest in music, I have been struck with what to others is probably a commonplace—that the best criticism of the day is private, and can apparently only exist on those terms. In such ways one seems to come in touch with almost a consensus of opinion, up to a certain point, and as far as a great deal of the ground is concerned. There is a discrimination and a definiteness that are entirely individual, and yet often strangely in agreement. To give one tiny example, on which a good deal of corroboration has come my way: I have found a number of people for whom the F minor Ballade and the Barcarolle of Chopin are separated from nearly all the rest of his music with a definiteness of which you will get no hint from any published commentary. On the other hand where divergences are revealed they tend to be homogeneous and coherent, and therefore interesting and fruitful—as witness the quotation from Mr. Newman's private correspondence. In comparison, criticism above ground (what criticism there is at all, apart from the reception of new music) is at sixes and sevens, or only agrees by accepting for working purposes an axiom that compositions on the same base (Bach, Mozart, Brahms) and between the same parallels are equal, each to each.

We have, it seems, a public stock-exchange of criticism, and behind it the men whose values are based on solid personal possession. The public market, in the first place, isn't much concerned about the gilt-edged securities which matter most; it is excited about new issues. In the second place, though in some cases the men who are the actual owners and workers are also the stock-brokers, they don't in that capacity pool their private knowledge. What fluctuations do take place

represent distantly, and sometimes exaggeratedly, a change in real values, but are in themselves meaningless. The public, for example, have never heard the primary facts about the long decline in Handelian stock, and its rather sharp recovery, or as to a certain liveliness in Mozart that began about ten years back. There must be a number of individuals who have a story to tell of what happened to their spiritual possession of this music; perhaps it is somewhere preserved in private diaries and letters, but, so far as I know, it has never been told.

Now to gather up the causes which prevent the best coin of criticism from coming into circulation, and then to see if any practical remedies can be suggested.

The causes have pretty well emerged in the course of discussion. We have seen that they are partly in the individual—in his tendency to shirk the risks and effort involved in any attempt to go to the centre of his task, when he can safely and easily reel off words in many thousands by skating round it. He will make the attempt for his own satisfaction, or in comparing notes with a kindred spirit; but he is not bound then to get his job done and fill so much space with it. Also, we might now add, there may be a certain reasonable fear of giving public statement to anything but broad and generalised judgments; one may find, by a sincerity which gives everything away, that one has been taken as identifying oneself with some school or party with which one has little in common—with a systematic detraction of Beethoven, for example.

And partly the causes lie in the present conditions of criticism, and the nature of the channels in which it has to flow. The difficulty is to find an occasion or excuse to blurt out what one's mind is full of. In journalism criticism must be attached to some current happening, which means that the critic is called on to give his impression of the substance of new music, and of the performance of old music. In the case of new music often enough he will have to force an opinion out of a fairly blank mind, and at the best history does not encourage us to believe that his judgment is likely to have permanent value. In the case of old music probably even the least fertile of critics comes, in the course of years, to the point of having something original and profitable to say. But imagine the nerve required to offer his views on the C minor Symphony! He is invited to speak about the wood-wind, or Sir Henry Wood; he isn't invited to speak about Beethoven. Turning to books, the liberty is not much greater. He is either writing for musical people, and then, if he blurted out what his mind is full of he would feel as if he were giving his Impressions of England. Or, perhaps, he is writing one of the new crop of educative books for the plain man. That might be his

best chance. But, unfortunately, there is a tendency to regard the man uncultivated in music as a pretty simple soul all round, who must needs be fed with infant food (a very curious error); and here again the writer on music is balked of the chance to empty his soul.

What the situation clearly demands is the opening, or more general exploitation, of some new channels of utterance. I offer two suggestions:—

(1) If we let ourselves be instructed by the analogy of literary or other criticism, one of the most promising channels would seem to me to be the essay. No authority who has an original contribution to make on the subject of Shakespeare, or Blake, or Coleridge need keep his light hid under a bushel, though it be only a detached ray; he doesn't even need to wait until *King Lear* is produced somewhere to supply the occasion.

Now, of course, *MUSIC AND LETTERS* exists precisely to provide a vehicle for the essay, and most thankful we are for it. It is quite plain that, through this medium, many of those who are best worth hearing have found it possible to say what would otherwise have remained unspoken; and the mere fact that there should be such an organ of expression quickens, as it always will, solitary reflections, and makes it better worth while to think them out, and put them in order. *MUSIC AND LETTERS* covers that part of the ground (between journalism, which is tied to the passing event, and more systematic writing in books, which is in danger of pedantry) where we are most likely to get real creative criticism, based on personal values, and a great deal of our hope is tied up with it.

Also, however, I want to suggest that an effort should be made to find entrance for the musical essay into the more general reviews and magazines of the better sort. In the specialised magazine—perhaps in *MUSIC AND LETTERS* most of all—the contributor must always be consciously writing for musicians, and a certain amount of the restraint that has been alluded to is bound to operate against simplicity and sincerity and reality. Whereas, in a general review, where all one can take for granted is a cultured and thinking reader, the musician might be drawn into a greater frankness and self-revelation, and so possibly speak more fruitfully for his brother-musician also, when he was only conscious of him as an onlooker. I may add that the causeries carried on in various weekly reviews and newspapers, brilliantly though some of them serve another function, hardly fit into my thought here. They are still specialised—a sort of musical section within the journal; they are only semi-detached from current events; they are not sufficiently spacious and leisurely. Yet it is certainly true that some of the best fragments of criticism are

repeatedly being thrown up in this quarter, and, in one case at least, the combined speed and sureness of the writing is a continual amazement.

(2) My second suggestion concerns books, and is a pressing in one special connection of my plea for the frankly personal and self-centred book about music.

I can well understand many musicians being far from disposed to give their blessing to this vein of literature. They have forebodings of the streams of egoism that would be unloosed, of being deaved with senseless, insufferable arrogance, displaying its soul-wriggles, and complacently assuming that they are of public importance.

By way of answer I would give my own impression (for what the impression of a tenderfoot is worth) that a very bad feature of musical criticism at present is a fashion of arrogance that is rather prevalent. One wishes one could be as certain of anything as some of our critics are of everything. Musical criticism would be greatly improved, and become even more authoritative, if it had a little more humility. It may seem that the whole trend of this discussion has been away from humility, but, curiously enough, I think not. Away from timidity and cautiousness and safe generalities, certainly; and in favour of sincerity. But, after all, the only sound guide between arrogance and undue humility is sincerity. What's wrong with bad criticism is that it is arrogant in the wrong places, and humble in the wrong places. It bluffs where it does not know, reasoning that nobody absolutely knows, and trying to imitate the sound of the authentic voice; and, on the other hand, it is too self-distrustful to say what it does really feel. I spoke about the possibility of a man being illuminating on music by writing about himself, rather than illuminating on himself by writing about music, and I think it is true, however paradoxical, that there may be more egoism in the latter attitude than in the former, and that the personal note in criticism may actually purify it from arrogance, or make it, if you like, arrogant in the right places and humble in the right places.

At the same time one fully admits the danger that those who would be most garrulous in this vein might be those least worth hearing, and that the few whose revelations would be inestimable might not be readily disposed to speak. And therefore, as I say, I would press this plea in one special direction.

It has come to be expected that when a man whose gifts have enriched his generation, and made him something of a figure in the life of his time, is getting towards the end of his course he should write some sort of personal retrospect. Musicians are no exception; we are quite accustomed to large volumes of memoirs. They have had to be

pressed for in some cases, no doubt, but on the whole there is no need for even the most sensitive and reserved of men to dread the suspicion of self-advertisement or undue self-assertiveness in such circumstances—at the end of a career.

This is the book that I should like to see turned to account. How good to read it might be if only some of the inward musical history were allowed to transpire through the record of outward experience. At present this seldom happens. In some cases, one is driven to believe the writer must have deliberately tabooed it. I remember reading a fairly recent autobiographical record by a well-known man whose whole life, from its boyhood to its honoured age, has been spent in musical activities. A fat and handsome volume it was, and from the first page to the last, as well as I recollect, not one single little thought about music emerged. One would hardly have believed it possible. Surely a man whose life had been spent in contact with the greatest of all expressions of the human spirit feels a certain compulsion to talk a little of those contacts in his summing-up, and not only of the celebrities he has met. And if anyone who would be worth hearing does not feel such a pressure someone ought to make him feel it, for he is strangely deficient in his sense of the relative values of what he has to tell. A very slight inward turn given to the retrospective survey would make all the difference between a book of quite trivial importance, such as we get at present, and that one contribution which every great music-lover has the power and the right and the duty to make towards a common body of criticism, when he sifts the experience of a lifetime.

Because the greatest of all tests of music is its wearing quality, not merely across the generations, but within the span of the individual life. And even the humblest voice is worth listening to when its time is come to sum up: *I have been young, and now I am old* . . . ; when it can tell us how it spake as a child, felt as a child, thought as a child; how it put away childish things; how it worked towards its ultimate resultant, *Now abideth* . . .

If you want authority that is the nearest you can get to it. Doubtless there is no place for the word in criticism, but even those who most instinctively recoil from it might well feel that such a voice must have caught some small fragment of the truth. And the best one can hope for musical criticism is that more of those who have loved the art first and last may wish, when they pause and look backward, to set down in all simplicity and sincerity something of what it has meant for them, feeling that the most inadequate attempt to speak of its inward realities is a worthier testament than the pack of little rubbishes which is so often offered us.

J. D. M. BORKE.

MUSIC IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A SERIES of questions, not important enough to print, elicited the views which follow. What leaps to light from the very various answers is that music in public schools is a matter of personality and of honest work, and that tradition and circumstances alter cases. Knowledge of music counts for little, knowledge of boys for much. They take kindly to choral singing, less as a social thing than as team work, and Dr. Stewart puts this first. Though they are sometimes prigs they are all trying not to be, as Dr. Buck truly sees. Dr. Dyson reminds us that they are great admirers of "Business Done," of practical means to practical ends. Boys have not yet tasted all the flavours and cannot judge between them; and Mr. Brent Smith pleads for the permissive growth of taste, while Mr. Sanderson prefers to foster and organise it. The "Parent," meanwhile, votes for the school where they make satisfactory music but no fuss about it.

Perhaps there is an interest beyond the immediate purpose of these essays. Every public school is England in miniature, and if we wish to know what the English make of music we may read it here. Each of the writers is, or was, an autocrat in his own sphere, and, like every beneficent autocrat, spends most of his time in driving a nail where it will go. It is of interest to see where he finds it *will* go. Might not the moral be of wider application? Should we be any the worse off if composers wrote with a definite purpose or a particular person or group of persons in mind, if concerts came to be regarded as "a misfortune which it is the musical society's duty to bear as cheerfully as possible," and if the plethora of recitals ceased to disguise from us the truth that our "mission is to the unmusical"?

I.

THE present place of music in the curriculum of public schools is a thing to be wondered at with due thanksgiving. Recognition and reform have come swiftly. It must be hardly more than a score of years since any Smith mi. was wont to pen a Sabbath wish home that he might be allowed to chuck music and take up sausages, and the music-master (visiting) stood outside the pale of consideration and attention. Wider and wiser

views, ably fostered by the Press broadcast, now prevail; methods and conditions of study have improved to an astonishing degree. The young musician's life at school is happy and progressive. There is the stimulus of atmosphere and team-work to attract, and the removal (in many cases) of such discouragements as the necessity of devoting precious hours of leisure to lessons and practice. Other and baser motives have played a small part in the movement, like "Choir-halves" or the synchronizing of singing-classes with more arduous studies. There is even the curious case of an Australian boy, in the writer's experience, who in 1913 eschewed his parents' express wish that he should learn the piano, and in 1915 put his name on the music pupils' list with the remark that he would rather do music than German.

Well! there is no doubt to-day about the educational value of the arts and among them of music. No need to labour that point. But the perusal of musical weekly and monthly papers, which devote much space to the discussion of teaching methods, suitable music, correspondence, and useful inquiry columns—often dealt with by established experts—prompts the thought that some of the larger aspects of public school music do not get their share of attention. Ask any head-master whether he wants his school to be musical, and, if so, what he means by musical. Most would answer "Yes" to the first question, not only on the general ground that all subjects should be taught well at their school, but from a genuine appreciation of the culture-power of the art; and to the second that the chapel singing and terminal concerts should be interesting and up to a high standard of performance, and that such boys as desired instrumental teaching should find adequate opportunities. All would refer in word or thought, with an inward sigh, to the difficulty of reconciling the conflicting claims of many departments. None would suggest the possibility of interfering with games in the interests of music—rightly, no doubt, so long as the routine of compulsory games does not become the hardest task of all. The musical school is not necessarily the one in which is found the greatest number of singers or players able to perform as soloists at a school concert, nor that in which the choir or choral society can render most efficiently elaborate music, though such things happen and are probable in a musical school. Special occasions are not the real test, nor fine performances the real business of school training. The attitude of the nation towards music offers an analogy. Concerts of high excellence, orchestras which stand comparison with the greatest, first-rate academies of music sending out streams of well-equipped artists and teachers, a strong and original group of composers, are not in themselves evidence enough to refute the constant charge that this is not a musical nation. There was a time when it was, and in those days

flourished music in the home. The madrigal books were brought out commonly to beguile the evening hours, and shirkers, like Pepys, were rare enough to occasion remark. There are signs of revival in these days. Every village in the Isle of Man has its little band of singers, who meet regularly in the winter, and study and discuss the music for next spring's festival. In the South, as well as the North, the spread of the Festival Competition tends to encourage many small societies to try their hand, besides those who risk an entry.

Similarly, in the smaller compass of a school it is the prevalence of the habit of combined singing which tells. The swing of a folk-song sung by the whole room at concerts, the house choral, the quartets of singers which spring up here and there in study or dormitory, the stimulus of the house singing cup, and, perhaps most of all, the character of the chapel services are influences which make music and the practice of it a familiar thing in school life.

The director of music holds a post of great responsibility, and one which demands exceptional qualities. His day's work covers a wide range, from teaching a stiff-fingered youngster to extract musical sounds from a discouraging piano to manœuvring for position in a timetable into which it is hard to squeeze a choir-practice or, that obtained, getting the best work out of a choir of very mixed voices. But, given enthusiasm and a cheery disposition, his life should be both happy and interesting. In one sense it is limited by the normal conditions of school life, the annual clearance at the end of the summer term, and the feeling of beginning all over again each September. In the lapse of years the longing must grow to get on to higher work and a wider sphere. In another sense it is limitless, with its never-failing supply of fresh young minds and new enthusiasms to mould and encourage. In looking back over a longish experience of public school work of this kind, one is tempted to hope that a few reflections on certain main principles of the job will be of interest, possibly even helpful. It is easy to see wherein lay any successes and where and why there were failures. When the whole is viewed in perspective certain objects seem to stand out clearly as desirable—nay, essential. The greatest of these is to get the whole school into the singing habit. There are ways of achieving this. It must be almost a common-place at Harrow with its Song-book. It happens at Tonbridge, where no terminal programme is complete without a bunch of folk-tunes or chanteys. Very likely it is getting quite common, and may become the fashion everywhere. The habit should be carried from the concert-room to the chapel, and the congregation taught to take its due share in the singing. If this can be achieved at St. Martin in the Fields, it should be easy in the compact

and uniform congregation which a school provides. The *Cantus firmus*, whether of plain song or the modern hymn, sustained by the main body, while choir or trebles break into a soaring descant is an inspiring sound, and the singing interesting to all. The habit of combined singing spreads to the houses, and offers material for admirable sing-songs at house-suppers. Every school should have its own song-book, containing a few (carefully chosen) songs of purely local interest, and more, far more, of recognised traditional beauty. There is no lack of such. The song-book should be found in every new boy's first batch of books. The special hymn-book is a more difficult matter and not so essential, seeing that there are one or two compilations of outstanding merit available to all. If these do not satisfy, then the task of selection may be undertaken. It is the first and greatest necessity in any school that its members should know familiarly and sing frequently some thirty to forty of the greatest folk-songs and chorales. Many a boy discovers a capacity and taste for music unsuspected by himself or his people, much in the same way that the war-time cult of the vegetable plot raised a rare crop of future gardeners. The old way of regarding musical boys as oddities of an abnormal class disappears when you learn by participation that music is a human and a natural art. Once achieve the singing habit and you have a foundation upon which to build. Appreciation and the learning of instruments—in fact, all branches of special study—will spring up on a better basis of understanding. The question is sometimes propounded "Should music at school be broad and shallow or narrow and deep?" Should the many be drawn in by lecture and concert, "appreciation-" and singing-class, or should gifted individuals be trained to a high proficiency? The answer is, see that the net be spread wide, with room and to spare for all, and let the deeper places look after themselves. Big fishes will weigh down their own part of the net naturally enough. The personal participation up to his powers of every boy is the cardinal factor. Then it follows that the lecture (profusely illustrated, of course), and the concerts (frequent) of both inside and outside talent (there should be both, and the best obtainable) do not fall on deaf ears, and the list of pianists and string-players grows naturally, and does not contain so many unwilling victims of parental wishes. It is unlikely in these days that schoolboys anywhere are given music lessons which are purely technical and do not include frequent illuminating talks on the why and the wherefore of the whole business, and a thousand points of general musical interest. It is as foolish for a musical boy to be just a 'cellist and nothing more, as it is for a great artist or teacher to be just a musician and nothing more. The training must be all-embracing, and the specialised study (as thorough as you like) incidental.

The purpose of this brief article has been to emphasise the broader aspects of public school music and its management. Questions of detail—the best arrangement of the limited time available, the standard of music performed and used for teaching, the strength of the musical staff, and a dozen other matters—all of great importance—receive their due share of thought and discussion. Once a year, at least, the Union of Directors of Music in Secondary Schools meets to that end, and thereby insures a regular interchange of ideas, invaluable for the steady march of progress notable during the last decade.

H. C. STEWART (*formerly at Tonbridge*).

II.

DEAR SIR,

I suppose every Public School music-master who receives your list of queries will wish that he could have a complete issue of MUSIC AND LETTERS in which to answer them at length. But if one of us did have such a privilege all the others would disagree with his answers; for the truth is, there is as yet no unanimity amongst us on the real bedrock questions. And, personally, I am prepared to argue that it is just as well we should all differ, since this really means, not that we are all groping in the dark, but that each one of us is exploring some avenue, losing his way and finding it again, discovering some new track or closing up some *cul-de-sac*, and gathering material for decisions for which the time is not yet ripe.

Your first question, for instance—"What is the object of teaching music at Public Schools at all?"—is wide enough to have a whole conference to itself. I can imagine a dozen fine and earnest speeches made, by better men than I am, with almost every word of which I should disagree. I should then be goaded into stating the axiom with which I start whenever that pertinacious question enters my mind, and the mere statement of it would bring down on me enough abuse to make me wish I had been coward enough to keep it to myself. For after more than 20 years of teaching music to boys I am convinced, with little hope that fresh evidence will ever change the conviction, that music, except in carefully restricted doses, is bad for boys. If a son of mine were specially "good at music" I should live on a perpetual volcano of apprehension, at all events so long as he could be called a "boy." When a musical boy comes my way I take, I think, more pains to restrict the amount of music he gets, to prevent his spending his leisure at it, to induce him to draw his dreams from some other fairyland, than most masters take to foster his talent. Let me say, in defence, that I do not intend by such a drastic method to kill

talent—I hope there are enough Harrow boys who have made good at music to prove the opposite—but I do mean that, in my opinion, when the normal healthy English boy proves to be musically gifted the smallest overdose of the food he is longing for will turn him into a monstrosity which is neither normal, nor healthy, nor English. And of such, in the artistic world, there are already too many.

The mission of the Public School music-master, as I conceive it, is first and foremost to the unmusical; that is (since few people are really unmusical) to the boys who, if left alone, would give music a wide berth and live their lives entirely outside its orbit. Convinced that this is my main duty, I have never troubled to try to sum up results. Reliable data are obviously almost impossible to obtain, and the failure to obtain them might easily lead to doubt and depression, and then possibly to a surrender to the easier alternative of getting the few talented musicians to make a brave show. But in my prouder moments I sometimes boast of one incident that went very near to my heart. Coming out from the last Bach Festival, two old Harrow boys spoke to me. They had never “learnt music” at school, so I expressed surprise at seeing them there, and found they had each bought season-tickets.

As I have no time to write an article, and would rather read the opinions of others than inflict any more heresies on you, I will not expand over any of your other queries.—Yours, etc.,

PERCY C. BUCK (*Harrow*).

III.

EXPERIENCE in four public schools makes me loth to generalise. No two schools have the same musical resources or tradition, and development is often conditioned by circumstances that are peculiar to one school or to one group of schools. Argument as to the precise status of music in education is therefore difficult to focus, and from my present point of view beside the mark. All public schools, whether musical by repute or not, demand music, and a good deal of it, both sacred and secular. There must be music in Chapel, there must be some form of public musical entertainment from time to time, and parents in large numbers demand individual tuition for their boys. These demands are quite independent of any notable musical promise, and they would persist even if the school could not boast one respectable performer. It is with such heterogeneous desires that the director of music has to deal; they are in origin both

spontaneous and universal, yet every practical problem has its special angle of approach.

It follows that in the solution of these problems personality plays a most important part. Amid that pressure towards stereotyped instruction which is inherent in institutional education, it is perhaps well that one or two subjects seem to defy regimentation. So far as music is an art rather than a science, it cannot be developed by the mechanical application of a syllabus. But this means that personal methods and aims must, for good or evil, affect every side of the subject. I propose, therefore, in dealing briefly with some of the usual features of public school music, to present them frankly from the point of view of my own experience.

To begin with music in Chapel. One finds in a school a few unbroken voices, a few voices which are broken and fairly mature, and a large majority of voices which are nondescript. The first two categories are organised into a choir which, if seating or other conditions permit, may well include all the sound voices in the school. Fluctuations in balance have to be reconciled, and in any case there are few, if any, real tenors, a point to which I shall return later. It is a common and a sound tradition that the choir should assist the congregation, not discourage it. Anthems and set services would be out of place in many schools. They should be reserved for special services or for organ recitals. The congregational singing of five or six hundred boys repays management and training. A short weekly practice for the whole school, at which new tunes can be taught, old ones corrected, and hints about production suitably generalised, is most useful.

Some schools enlarge the choir for the preparation of secular choral works. If there are not too many "passengers," and if the concert hall is suitably built, the choral society may include as many boys as can be properly handled. The choice of music is very difficult. One spends harassed hours looking vainly for tenor parts fit for voices which are at best "light baritone." High tenor parts I arrange ruthlessly, giving leads to altos and tenors combined, and frankly altering interior parts. Without this high-handed procedure one would either have to leave most of the best choral music out of account, or tolerate performances true to the letter rather than to the spirit of the music.

There remains the singing of unison songs. Here there is a wealth of material, and there is also a warm welcome for the very best, if it is effectively presented. One's chief complaint is that no book contains everything one wants. My own practice is to select what seem to me to be the best songs for unison singing, irrespective of their source. They are for the most part traditional or folk-songs, and not neces-

sarily easy. I score them for the school orchestra and teach them carefully to the choir. We then present them to the school at informal concerts, inviting everyone present to sing. New songs are given *twice* in the programme, the first performance being a rehearsal. The labour of scoring and partwriting is considerable, but songs so produced are well and easily learnt and are then permanently in the school repertory.

The introduction of class-singing into the normal public school curriculum is occasionally discussed. Analogy appears to be drawn from the excellent results obtained in elementary and preparatory schools by this means. But the voices of public school boys are for the most part unformed and defy any of the usual divisions into forms or sets. Further, such voices are effective in direct proportion to the numbers involved; small numbers give poor results.

The number of boy violinists and 'cellists fluctuates, but there are usually enough to form the foundation of a school orchestra. Viola, doublebass and possibly other instruments may sometimes be recruited from the staff. Boys can be taught to play the flute and the clarinet respectably, pianists being often keen to tackle some such instrument in order to get into the orchestra. The O.T.C. band may provide a nursery for wind instruments. But the wind and brass of the classical orchestra is as a whole impossible, and if classics are attempted some degree of "arrangement" is unavoidable. The bold method is the best, but as it entails writing complete new wind parts suited to the distribution and capacity of the players available, it demands skill, care and patience. An organ, or even a harmonium, part carefully edited can be made helpful and unobtrusive. For training purposes works for strings only, consistent in their degree of difficulty, are very useful, and to these wind parts can be added *ad libitum*. The school orchestra is in fact a pre-classical orchestra, more nearly related in variety of composition to Bach than to Beethoven.

Boys are very fond of chamber music of all kinds, and comparatively unpromising players will often answer well to this stimulus.

There remains the individual pupil. He exists in considerable numbers, he is the foundation of the purely musical staff, and he is predominantly a pianist. One is sometimes asked what profit there is in teaching piano-playing to boys who have no particular aptitude for it. Apart from the obvious retort that this query may be applied to any school subject, the practical answer is that one has little or no choice. Some boys are both keen and capable, some are capable but lazy, some keen but clumsy, a good many take the subject as it comes to them without active likes or dislikes, a very few are definitely hostile. But in nine cases out of ten it is the parent who demands

the lessons initially, not infrequently against the boy's inclination. Parents are not always persuaded even by a frank intimation that the pupil shows no signs of being likely to benefit by teaching. Add to this the fact that boys of some years' standing in a school have been known to *begin* learning the piano at their own request, and the further truth that what is clumsy and dull to the listener may yet seem well worth while to the boy himself; I think one has to be above all things patient. It is far from proved that the education of dullards is futile, and proved or not, we go on trying. It has been suggested, as a solution of this problem, that instruction in music should be provided without extra fees, tuition being allotted to boys who, after a fair trial, show promise.

In the teaching given, personality is everything. Some teachers can arouse enthusiasm for playing scales. Others provoke small response in any direction. It is easy to criticise the concentrated teaching of a "piece," but there is something to be said for habits of application and for not covering more ground than can be assimilated; the boy who never learns any one thing respectably is not likely to go very far either as reader or interpreter. Sight-reading can hardly be over-emphasised; technical exercises can be thinly disguised. Ear-training, involving recognition of major and minor, of modulation, and of simple melodic, harmonic or rhythmic design, is a natural ingredient of interpretation. Finally, there is endless gossip about the whole subject which will produce practical results if too many hares are not drawn at a time.

The practice of giving lessons in school hours is growing in favour. Apart from the complication of time tables, in which every lesson must be changed each week so as not to clash with the same school period consecutively, I know of no disadvantages. The great gain is continuous teaching, with a consequent economy of staff. The more favourable attitude of the pupil to his lessons may be a further asset, though it would be an exaggeration to say that this adds materially to the number of potential pupils. Boys with important examinations ahead sometimes prefer out-of-school lessons. The competition between music and games in out-of-school hours is often misunderstood. Team games are for all practical purposes compulsory, and it is less of a dislocation to take a boy out of his form than to take him out of his team. It is when we reach the problem of finding adequate time for practice that the competition, not of games alone, but of every form of organised activity, becomes almost insuperable. Substantial periods of leisure are few, and can scarcely be said to exist for the junior boy. A boy who would do woodwork, drawing, music

and natural history, not to mention photography and various forms of applied science, needs a day of twice the normal length. Average boys who must take the School Certificate or some equivalent examination cannot be taken out of school for music practice. Boys working for scholarships are mostly in like case. When, however, these events have been disposed of or dispensed with, I have been able to arrange for promising pupils to study music in place of a school subject which is relatively unprofitable to them. Such boys can be trained along broad lines and the work done can be counted for promotion on the same terms as other subjects. Specialists apart, one is thankful if the normal pupil can get enough practice to keep going.

Among public musical events competitions deserve special mention. A challenge cup for the best house glee-party and prizes for individual competitors, vocal and instrumental, are almost universal. Perhaps the best form of competition is that in which houses seek distinction by offering a short programme of three or four items of varied character, produced exclusively by their own members, and intended to be judged as a whole. Solos and concerted pieces each have their place, and the ethics of team-play are encouraged. House concerts, informal concerts, organ recitals and school concerts proper provide ample opportunities for music of all kinds. In my opinion professional assistance should be reduced to a minimum in concerts which are essentially representative of the resources of the school, but professional performances of the highest standard are of incalculable value both as an education and as an incentive. Most boys spend their holidays in the country, and the musical experience of the unusually gifted is often confined to what the school can offer. We should give them the best possible. A professional orchestra appeals to everyone, and schools can in most cases provide audiences of such a size that the cost per head is small. If preparation is made by preliminary exposition of the programme, the event becomes a very fertile experience. Lectures, however, need not be reserved for special occasions. There are few periods of musical history and few features of our musical heritage that cannot be illustrated to a fair degree by comparatively simple means. There is much picturesque detail concerning music, musicians and musical apparatus that makes the subject live even to those whose approach is altogether non-technical. Not all music-masters are effective speakers, but if one plays good stuff with conviction, suggesting even the barest outline of historical or artistic perspective, the music itself will do the rest.

My attitude toward the whole subject is intended to be essentially catholic. The more widely representative the music of a school can be

made, the more will it live and be fruitful. Taste is born of experience, and good music is good because accumulated experience finds it permanently satisfying.

G. DYSON (*Wellington*).

IV.

RECENT writers of public school fiction have given us the impression that the normal boy is by nature a Philistine whom an earnest and artistic young master may by personal influence possibly transform into a prig. That impression may be right or it may be wrong, but in its crude contrast we recognise the artistic Scylla-and-Charybdis of modern education. It is a difficult task for a music-master to steer a course between the production of apathy and the fostering of priggishness. His object must be to put good music before all sorts and conditions of boys, so that unconsciously they may form a good standard of judgment without priding themselves upon their superiority to the less enlightened.

How are we to find opportunities for creating this standard of judgment?

We shall certainly not do so by compulsory concerts or by scholarly lectures. Compulsion always introduces a feeling of resentment even amongst the most willing, and absolutely infuriates the free-thinkers. We must keep our music free from school discipline, but make it so attractive that popular opinion establishes it as an institution. Lectures on music, though admirable if regarded as part of European history, do not help towards musical appreciation. They point out, but cannot make us feel, the beauties of music, and the result of this sort of musical education is a sentimental admiration for beauties which we do not feel and a priggish contempt for music which we have been told to despise. Musical appreciation can only be obtained by direct contact with music.

What we require is the actual performance of music—music of all sorts, instrumental, choral and operatic—so that we may attract listeners of all types. In the school chapel there are opportunities daily of letting boys hear good music of every description. In doing so we must not establish a rule of playing "nothing but the best." Frequently "the best" demands a peculiar intellect and years of study. For instance, to many literary minds Henry James may seem "the best," yet to offer him to children is as thoughtful and kind as to offer poison to a pet kitten. So also, to many musicians Bach's

short chorale-preludes may be "the best," yet they should be served up to boys with discretion. We must discard "nothing but the best" and substitute "anything that is good." Symphonies, overtures, chamber-music, oratorios and even operas can be judiciously transcribed and repeatedly played. In this way an atmosphere of musical appreciation is created in the school, though it must be admitted that it is possibly rather a rarefied atmosphere. But if A is going to be a stockbroker he will not be the worse for loving the *Unfinished Symphony* without knowing where the development begins; nor will B, who hopes to be one of our knight-conductors, be the worse musician for sandwiching his music between hunks of Latin, washed down with oceans of physics. Music should not be specialised; but, on the other hand, music should not be thrown as an alternative to games (if, in these days, it really is), nor should it be placed as an obstacle in the boys' race to the top of the school. But, if we feel inclined to complain about the various hindrances we meet, we must remember that "in a way it's a compliment" to music, which demands complete self-sacrifice on the part of its votaries and imposes upon them, especially in their novitiate, a ritual-test of deliberate inconvenience. What deters many boys nowadays from learning music is not the inconvenience or the athletic competition, but the expense. If school authorities could remove individual music-lessons from the list of extras, the number of learners would increase enormously. That is a change which should be made.

Choral.—Another powerful factor in the creation of a musical atmosphere is the choir and the choral society. A few schools are able to maintain an orchestral society, but the difficulty of performing much music without help from professionals or good amateurs prevents it from becoming an integral part of school music. In choral matters there are no such difficulties. There is no choral society which could not perform without assistance most of the great choral works when once a singing tradition has been established. The difficulty of finding tenors can be overcome by a judicious, if entirely illegal, arrangement of passages which would otherwise put an unbearable strain upon the singers' voices and the listeners' endurance. Boys seem to find little or no difficulty in learning vocal music. Their power of reading at sight would shame many matured choral societies. Their chief difficulty seems to be rhythm rather than intonation. This instinct for sight-reading may only exist in schools which keep a choir occupied daily at school services and may be the result of practice, but, whatever the cause, I have never found any necessity to teach sight-reading. Some schools are not so fortunate as to have a four-part choir, preferring to choose the leaders of the singing by their success on the football

field. *Æsthetically*, all the arguments are in favour of a choir of musicians. In the first place, a choir can add interest to a service by singing one or more verses of a hymn unaccompanied, or it can combine with the congregation in singing a verse with *faux-bourbons*, a form of hymn-singing valuable not only for the spiritual exaltation it produces, but also for the opportunity it provides to the unmusical for singing an independent part in a great chorus. The effect is stupendous; the whole building rings with praise, and the echoes which dance among the masonry seem indeed to make the very stones cry out.

Instrumental.—To most parents learning music means learning the piano. In fact, parents have been known to tell the much-harassed music-master that their boy wishes to give up music and learn singing. In so doing, he was but following the precedent of many famous singers. Learning the piano stands coupled with learning French—the heavenly twins of polite learning. Few boys and girls learn German; still fewer Italian, Spanish, Russian or American, though each language possesses treasures of learning and wit. No, German is not considered polite learning; Italian and Spanish are the highways to amorous misadventures; Russian brings suspicion upon a man. So, too, the pianoforte is polite learning to the exclusion of all other instruments. Once the flute was essentially a masculine instrument, but who would learn it now? The harp was once the glory of warrior-kings, but what boy would appear at a camp sing-song with such an unmanly instrument slung over his shoulder? So be it! Learning music is learning the pianoforte (or else the drum). That would be all right if boys actually did use the pianoforte for acquainting themselves with music; but, alas! too often they are taught parrot-wise to play without notes—at least, without many right notes—some desiccated fragment of Dussek. Others have their little souls warped and wrung with cheerless labour at music of no beauty for examinations of no value. Of course, they must begin at the beginning; but they should always feel that they are making music, and that they are learning to play, not in order to pound out a few dull pieces, but for the sake of discovering for themselves the myriad beauties which lie concealed in the works of the great masters.

Concerts.—Official concerts are a misfortune which it is the musical society's duty to bear as cheerfully as possible. The real function of the choral society is to keep a constant stream of choral music flowing in the school. They meet together to make music, just as the Shakespeare Society meet together to read plays. Concerts check the flow; but, as they are inevitable, let us consider them. The audience

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is peculiar; that is, they are parents who have come down to see their boys sing. This raises a difficulty in drawing up programmes. There seems to be a law amongst school programme-builders that the works chosen either must be by inferior composers or else must be the worst and least distinguished work of the great composers. "The Banner of St. George" represents Elgar; "In Silent Night" represents Brahms. The glories of English madrigals are neglected for square-cut imitations of German glees. School concerts are the outward sign of the school's musical growth, so that the importation of foreign talent must be considered a symptom of ill health. Admirable programmes can be arranged without leaving the school premises. Choral societies can sing unaccompanied part-songs of various degrees of difficulty from "Since first I saw your face" to "My love dwelt in a Northern land," or "There is an old belief." There are usually soloists fit to sing quite creditably and unaffectedly the various solos that are necessary, though it is a good plan not to allow one small boy to sing unless there are others to divert the attention and to divide the glory. For unofficial concerts, we should rope in from outside as many players and singers as is possible. It enables boys to hear unfamiliar forms of music, and it fires their ambition to excel as executants. These concerts are delightful—all the boys present are there because they wish to hear the music; they make themselves comfortable in a way that only schoolboys know, and there is a feeling of friendliness which brings out the best of the performers. Lest too long a sojourn in the realms of high art should produce a spirit of priggishness, it is as well occasionally to indulge in boisterous sing-songs, full of comic songs, sketches and burlesques. The love of Beethoven does not preclude a delight in the vigour of good rag-times, any more than the love of Rembrandt precludes a delight in the *curiosa perversitas* of Heath Robinson, but it does preclude the slightest enjoyment of violet-limelight love-songs, which for many people pass as serious art. Such songs can only be used if their sentiment and banality are exaggerated or parodied until their shame is laid bare to everyone. Thus sing-songs may become educationally valuable by laying the dæmon of priggishness and by showing why bad music is bad.

What, then, is the necessary mental equipment for the musical staff of a public school? It is not necessarily a brilliant technique upon an instrument; it is not a vast knowledge of the history and theory of music; it is not a gift of eloquence that persuades boys against their wills. But it is a child-like pleasure in music and a boundless enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which may flounder hopelessly among the rules of double-counterpoint; an enthusiasm which may tolerate whole

handfuls of wrong notes; an enthusiasm which may be incoherent in the praise of what it loves, but still an enthusiasm which will awaken the curiosity of the apathetic and fire the imagination of the eager.

A. BRENT SMITH (*Lancing*)

V.

MODERN education is based on the organisation of a wide curriculum, giving spacious opportunity for applying the sciences and the arts to the service of the community, and providing suitable work for all types of boys. The methods break away from the classroom system, and give abundance of freedom for individual enterprise. An effort is made to focus the school on the problems and needs of the day, and to organise the work of groups of boys and masters for this purpose. Such work will call for the application of all kinds of knowledge and talents which may be said to be the chief characteristics of a modern school. There is no separation between ancient and modern studies, for both will be needed, and in their use new interpretations and meanings will be discovered and applied. The aims of a modern education will give rise to fundamental changes in the organisation and values of schools. Many of these changes can be illustrated from the teaching of music. Hitherto the time of boys and masters has been absorbed in instrumental music lessons. Music has not been studied as a modern language is studied for the purpose of applying it to reading. The normal music lesson is comparable with writing verse but never reading the poets. It grows dull, and many fall by the way. The system, too, leaves out of music a large number of boys who could read music with understanding but could not learn to play. We believe that every boy in a school should be given the opportunity of learning to appreciate music, and be able to read and appreciate its masters. Music, like literature, science, and other arts, is an instrument for the expression of ideals and thoughts—a language which should be studied by everyone. The great musical works dwell on those themes in the life of man which find their highest expression in music. In the modern study of the life of man and of the evolution of the soul music must be impressed into the service of history, and be made a part of the general work of a school.

Such an extension of music in the school has been made possible by the invention of the gramophone. Records of the works of the masters can now be obtained, and every school can have its collection as part of its library, and for similar purposes. These records can be

handled as books, consulted, read, studied. Soon there will be records giving indexes to the musical section of the library, grammars, dictionaries, and other aids to study. The books are, of course, all translations, but they give reasonably true interpretations of the original works, and rapid improvements are being made.

The Greek and Latin classics are now making their appeal through translations to the multitude, and the precincts of Plato and Aristotle are being invaded by a new race—unlettered maybe, inarticulate, "stammering lips," uncultured, but alive in a practical way to modern needs and the new values. Some there are who object to the use of art in history or ethics. To them art has its own gift. There is the revolt from Ruskin. Perspectives, lines, harmonies, surprises please the artistic sentiment, and it is enough. So, too, in literature and painting the works of the modern masters which express the soul of the world become anathema. But the masters were at all times prophets and seers, rejected of men—yet they were the great artists, the true historians and revealers of their time.

The work of a modern school is to prepare a receptive medium. But a medium must be constituted out of the whole mass of boys and masters. This is a change over to democracy in education, and fortunately of all the arts music is the most democratic, for all people love music and are capable of understanding it. The percentage of boys who cannot make use of music is very small. Probably less than 5 per cent. cannot sing in tune, or join in choral singing. An astonishing number can learn to play an instrument, and probably all can appreciate music, and learn to understand or read it. Reading of music seems to depend more on desire and vision than upon musical capacity.

Naturally, singing is the prime instrument in teaching music and developing the musical capacities, and it can easily be provided for in schools. There is class singing in the junior school, say, twice a week; there is also singing needed in modern languages, in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian—one period of the language per week for the young boys, with phonetics; dramatic recitations and performances requisition the soloists as well as the choir, and orchestra; choral and orchestral societies once a week; Sunday afternoon recitals; the music lesson for at least half the school; and more than any of these the full school practice every Saturday for the Sunday service—all tend to create the atmosphere of music and draw the school within its seductive influence.

An example, the result of this influence, of a more difficult adventure into full school singing may be given. It is an experiment, and a fuller criticism appeared in the *Musical Times* of January. By the

advice of Miss Carrie Tubb, and through her help and encouragement, the school undertook to prepare in one term the greater part of "The Messiah." The orchestral parts were taken by the school orchestra of 38 boys, and a choir of 230 boys sang the choruses. Certain passages in the choruses were selected from among the four voices in which the rest of the school (270 boys) could suitably reinforce the choir—non-choir these boys were called. Practices of the full school were taken two mornings a week, instead of morning prayers—the choir and orchestra for an hour each Saturday. During the last week additional practices were given, but never so as to interfere seriously with the regular work of the school. It was no doubt strenuous work, but enthusiasm grew as the term went on; and there is every desire to try a more difficult work, viz., Bach's Mass in B minor.

A brief account may be given of the use of music in history. The individual research method of investigating history makes the use of art, architecture, music a possible adjunct. Forms are divided into groups of four or five boys, and each group has its own work to do. One group will undertake to study the music of the period, and its bearing on the life of the people. A library of records is collected for the special study, and music masters are set free to act as advisers and administrators. On occasion recitals or demonstrations are given to the whole form, or group of forms. There are many difficulties, but we can only feel our way to what seems a useful field of enquiry. The object is to open out music to the great mass of boys in the school, whether they can learn instrumental music or not, taking it as a language, a method of expression, which most boys can learn to understand. Incidentally, it will make some change in the work of the music masters, and come as a relief, and bring them into closer touch with other members of the staff.

The following syllabus of library work in history is chosen out of a fairly large number of schemes of different character for boys of varying ages.

F. W. SANDERSON
(*Headmaster of Oundle*).

Outline of work to be done during two terms by a group of boys from ScVib, in connection with the history period 1815-1914.

(1) General survey of the music of the century. Hear and discuss typical movements of composers from Schumann onwards, leading to and including masters of the modern Russian and British schools. Make a chart of the period.

(2) Special subject:—Wagner and his music dramas.

Life and works. The Lyric drama as he found it. Reforms. Artistic aims and methods. Opposition. Some ideals realised. Orchestral developments. Comparisons. Influence on later composers.

The stories of the music dramas. "The Flying Dutchman," "Tannhäuser," "Lohengrin," "Tristan und Isolde," "The Ring," "Parsifal."

Detailed study of "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg."
Wagner's philosophy; ascertain its bearing upon his art.

Books of reference:—

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Colles | - | - | Growth of Music, Part 3. |
| Henderson | - | - | "Richard Wagner." |
| Newman | - | - | "A Study of Wagner." |

Vocal scores of:—

- "Die Meistersinger."
"Lohengrin."
"Tristan und Isolde."
"Parsifal."

Orchestral scores of:—

- Overture to "Tannhäuser."
"Lohengrin." Prelude, and Prelude to Act III.
"Die Meistersinger" Overture.

Records:—

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Schumann | - | - | String Quartet in A; Violin Sonata in A minor. |
| Schubert | - | - | "Unfinished" Symphony; Songs. |
| Mendelssohn | - | - | "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; "Ruy Blas" Overture. |
| Elgar | - | - | "Cockaigne"; Cello Concerto. |
| Ethel Smyth | - | - | "The Boatwain's Mate." |
| Vaughan Williams | - | - | "On Wenlock Edge." |
| Ireland | - | - | 2nd Violin Sonata. |
| Cesar Franck | - | - | Violin Sonata in A. |
| Debussy | - | - | Prelude "L'après-midi d'un faune." |
| Ravel | - | - | String Quartet. |
| Tschaikowski | - | - | 5th Symphony; "Casse-noisette" Suite. |
| Scriabine | - | - | "Poème de l'extase." |
| Stravinski | - | - | "L'oiseau de feu." |
| Wagner | - | - | "Der Fliegende Holländer" Overture. |
| "Tannhäuser" | - | - | Overture; "Venusberg" music. |
| "Lohengrin" | - | - | Prelude; Prelude to Act. II.; King's Song; Elsa's Dream; Bridal Chorus; Lohengrin's Narrative and Farewell. |
| "Tristan und Isolde" | - | - | Isolde's Love-song. |
| "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" | - | - | Overture; "Dance of the Apprentices." Mastersingers' procession; "By the silent Hearth"; Walther's Prize-song. |
| "Der Ring" | - | - | Entry of the Gods into Valhalla; Ride of the Valkyries; Magic-fire scene; Brünnhilde's Battle-cry; "Spring now is here"; Siegfried's Funeral March. |
| "Parsifal" | - | - | Prelude; "Transformation music." |

Scheme of work, taking Handel's "Messiah" as a starting point, followed by boys in CIVB1 and EVB3 during the term, at the end of which "The Messiah" was given by the school.

1. "The Messiah." Complete the knowledge of the work gained in singing it by hearing and analysing the numbers which in the school performance are omitted. Become acquainted with the solos before hearing them at the final rehearsal.

Records:—"The Messiah"—omitted choruses, and the solos.

2. Other music of Handel—his operas. Opera and oratorio compared.

Records:—Solos from "Samson," "Semele," etc.

3. Contemporary composers (including J. S. Bach). Comparison with Handel.

Records:—Instrumental fugues and vocal excerpts—Bach.

4. Composers previous to the time of Handel, from whose work the style of the period took shape.

Records include those of Purcell.

5. Oratorio. Comparison of "The Messiah" with Mendelssohn's "Elijah."

Records:—Overture, solos, trio, and choruses from "Elijah."

VI.

IDEALLY, perhaps this vexed subject might best be handled after the manner of Socratic enquiry, by a dialogue in which the Parent, the Issue (we are old-fashioned enough to write them in that order), the Headmaster, and the Musical Director, might arrive at some first principles, and emit some practical suggestions on their way to them.

But that would be a more difficult way, as well as a longer. Instead, we propose very briefly to try to indicate a few of the considerations which may be those of a member of the public who can afford—but not too easily afford, *bien entendu*—to be sending a boy or girl to a public school.

For present purposes we will postulate with all submission that this person, who may conveniently be termed the Parent, be male, and have such musical experience as has made for happiness in life; that the Issue be interested in music somewhat beyond the point of being able to sing in tune, and have made some preliminary study of a musical instrument.

The Parent is genuinely desirous that the Issue should have the best available opportunities of “keeping up” and extending, in the course of general and practical education, that interest in music which he himself “kept up” and—he is grateful (and rather proud) to remember—was enabled, at a public school, to develop. On reflection he feels, too, that nothing could have killed that interest. He remembers that it has survived many destructive influences. Conscious that his violin-playing is despicable in itself, he is the happier in knowing that he loves to play the violin in secret.

Is the Issue, he wonders, in much the same case as I was at his age? What were the medium and environment of my own musical interest—and what are those of the Issue's?

We think the Parent must inevitably decide that, outwardly at least, the Issue will enter a public school with a larger and more varied musical experience than was his own, say, twenty-five years ago. In that period, and especially in the last ten years of it, there has been a very great increase in the physical and mechanical—especially mechanical—performance of music. Twenty-five years ago the habit of feeding in public to the strains (apt word!) of an orchestra had scarcely begun to form in this country. Choral societies and concert parties were much more innumerable. The gramophone had not pullulated. The player-piano was not (*vice* the silent “cottage” instrument) a shining rival to the dusty aspidistra in every bourgeois parlour. Corporation (ambiguous predicate!) bands, playing ponderously in municipal parks

were very few. Art had not expressed herself by the cinema, in terms of optical, auditory, sessile, sensuous comfort.

By Jove, says the Parent, the young people have music wherever they go. Banbury Cross is not in it, says the Parent.

But he remembers certain other things: Church music, for instance. In those old days, the singing of hymns and chants, in parts, as they used to call it, counted for a good deal. There was probably too much sugar and chromatics and sentiment about it. Perhaps, however, there is nothing now to take its place. Then, young people and old sang together not only in the home but even in Church. Now, what is become of Home, and of Church?

The Parent may here bite hard upon his pipe-stem. Probably the public schools—certainly many of them—provide very fairly in their Chapel services a right amount of happiness for young people in singing and in hearing music. Presumably only in the Chapel services will there be any compulsory music, applicable to all.

It is true that his own recollections of School Chapel are not that it supplied all the happiness he could have soaked in, or even most of it, whether of music or anything else. But it supplied a certain regular musical experience, whether or not one was in (or of!) the choir—while, for this Parent himself, it seems to have been an essential element of religion. An objective or a subjective element?—asks the Parent. Was it better to be a hearer only, or a doer of these things? To be in the school fifteen and listen—or to sing and wear merely a house-cap?

Here, if not sooner, has begun a movement of rusty wheels in the brain (and heart) of the Parent. Memories of *μουσική*, of Plato, his short way with imitators, of his grave discrimination between the kinds of artists, his discountenance of musical performance by freemen of the State.

The Parent's pipe-stem cracks. But he thinks he sees one clear decision. If the Issue of this argument were promising (or threatening) artistry, it should not go to a Public School.

But the name of the Issue is, as they say, "down for" three (hypothetical) Public Schools, and its bearer is possessed of wit enough to enter any of them creditably. They seem to fall, *ceteris paribus*, into three categories (O, unfailing influence of "Greats"!) something after this manner:—

(1) School A makes a "feature" of music. The Headmaster has been a member of the Bach choir, the Musical Director is as near as can be an artist. Music is part of the fixed curriculum. An orchestra, supplemented by local professionals and amateurs, is spoken of with

awe, jealousy or derision by other schools; and adult female voices assist the Chapel choir.

(2) School B has a Headmaster with no "ear," but (of course) a sensitive conscience and active educational disposition. The Musical Director is of the old school, claiming Plato as an ally in utter damnation of the gramophone for base imitation in at best the fourth degree; and snorting when his colleagues remind him that at least it substitutes listening for performance—pulls, so to say, Plato by another fold of his cloak. In the fixed curriculum is no place for music, but students "taking" music are carefully taught and their progress is checked by rational examination. They "take" it, however, at a varying sacrifice of fresh air and games.

(3) School C may be said to "date" rather markedly. The Headmaster is a "Kingsley" man—a good oar, a good classic. The music is left to the direction of a small committee of the staff, the Chapel services on that side, and the teaching of music to those students who "take" it, being carried out locally by available professionals. In consequence, music is little accounted of in the public opinion of the school. Upon the staff, however, are two or three more or less efficiently musical persons (they are not all members of the committee) and these are able to organise glee-singing, occasional professional concerts, and small concerted music for the few enthusiasts among the students. That they are so able implies leisure and skilful organisation.

This presents—perhaps not unfairly, though very incompletely—a theoretical range of choice with which our Parent may have to deal.

In practice, some personal element will largely influence his decision. For instance, the Issue may have a congenial friend of like age, and they two will make the best of things musically at one school. Or the Parent similarly may have a friend on the staff at School C.

In fact, we rather think it would be School C for our Issue, and God be with It. It is the Issue that counts, after all.

To sum up, we think the Parent was right in holding that a Public School is no place for artistry in music.

We know he was right in his view that a genuine love of music cannot be killed. Atrophied or warped, alas! it can be.

And we are surer than ever that this is a vexed subject—one to shatter many pipe-stems, or, again with all submission, delicate cigarette holders.

They will be shattered in a most worthy cause.

W. MURRAY MARSDEN.

"THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY CREATURE IN EUROPE"

DURING Rossini's first visit to England—in December, 1828—he heard at the Rothschilds' house a boy pianist: so impressed was the composer that he pronounced this boy, George Aspull, to be "the most extraordinary creature in Europe." Clementi had already called George Aspull "the greatest genius he had ever met with," and Kalkbrenner had vowed that "he had never met with such excellence." It seems improbable that most of the leading musicians of George Aspull's day should have expressed exaggerated opinions, and one is led to conclude that an undoubted musical genius was born at Manchester in June, 1818, the ninth of ten sons of Thomas Aspull, violinist and music teacher. There is a lurking element of humour in the *Harmonicon's* account of George's father: "he was formerly in business, but not being successful, was compelled to resort to music as a profession." If music were but a *pis aller* to Thomas Aspull, his sons would appear to have inherited considerable musical talent: in the father's own words, "all possessed a force of ability far above mediocrity." This "force of ability" developed in George's very earliest infancy, since we are told that he never indulged in "that unintelligible hum" which is usual at a very tender age, but his singing consisted of "a wild and melodious flow of musical phrases, perfectly beautiful and enchanting." When George was first placed at the pianoforte by his father in February, 1821, "in a few minutes the names of the notes were learnt, the correct position of the hand upon the instrument gained." Calling to mind the early efforts of an ordinarily intelligent beginner one must admit that this one possessed genius—not "the infinite capacity for taking pains," but that intuition which leaps upon a subject, seizes it and makes it part of its own essence. In four months' time George played Cramer's first study in C with "a power, style, character and rapidity of finger perfectly astonishing." George's eldest brother, William, in January, 1822, gave a concert at which George played in a duet and sang "Nid noddin'." In July and August of the same year he delighted hundreds of Southport visitors by playing from memory and extemporizing in the "practice room." In February, 1828, George was introduced to Kalkbrenner, and after

hearing the boy play, Kalkbrenner declared that "he had never met with such excellence, and so great a disposition for music in one so young." Encouraged by this pronouncement, George's father took the boy to London, where he was brought before Clementi's notice, to be acknowledged as the greatest genius Clementi had ever met with,—George "had more poetical inspiration in his playing than any person he (Clementi) had ever heard." Soon afterwards came the meeting with Rossini, who went on to prophesy that, given a pianoforte of suitable size for his abnormally small hands, George would play "anything that was ever written better than any man that ever lived." Surely more generous admiration was seldom bestowed by an acknowledged master on a younger brother of the same art.

Royal attention having been drawn to this prodigy, "young Aspull" was commanded to attend Windsor Castle on February 20, 1824, George IV. being under the conviction that he was a music-lover. Under the heading "Musical Phenomenon," an article appeared in the *Harmonicon* for March, 1824, in which the visit to Windsor is described, and we learn that the impression created by George on his Majesty was "that of unqualified admiration." A curious feature of this article is the statement that George's "present age (is) only eight years." Some confusion is evident, and one imagines that parental pride induced Thomas Aspull temporarily to forget the date of his ninth son's birth. This appears probable, since the same statement regarding George's age appears in an article on "Public Music in London, 1824," to be found in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, July, 1824. "Two examples of early talent have appeared this season in the persons of two boys—George Aspull and Francis Liszt. The former is of English parents, and in his ninth year. . . . They are both pianoforte players. Aspull is certainly an extraordinary child. He executes the most rapid compositions with a neatness and brilliancy altogether surpassing his years." A month after his appearance at Windsor, George gave a concert at the Argyll Rooms, under the "Especial Patronage of his Majesty," when the room was thronged even to the staircases. George was next asked to give a concert under the patronage of H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester and the direction of "His Majesty's Concerts of Ancient Music." On this occasion he played a Concerto by Czerny and selections from Mozart's works. "Young Aspull's" third concert was given at Blackheath under the patronage of the Countess of Dartmouth. The somewhat fulsome acknowledgments of George's various patrons by the boy's father strike a note that jars on modern susceptibilities and make one thankfully reflect *nous avons changé tout cela*. George's

first public display of extemporary playing followed at Ramsgate: a series of concerts at Dover, Hastings, etc., culminated in a performance at Brighton, in which the King's band under Cramer's direction assisted the young pianist. A noteworthy event was the introduction of Weber's *Concertstück* to an English audience, and its enthusiastic reception: the listeners rose simultaneously at its conclusion with waving handkerchiefs.

In 1825 George was taken by his father to Paris, where at Mr. Erard's house he met Hummel, whose exclamation after hearing the juvenile pianist was "Wonderful! wonderful!" Proceeding to recommend a strict course of study for two years, Hummel predicted that George then would be "the Greatest Musical Genius that ever appeared." Moscheles and Kalkbrenner endorsed Hummel's opinion, and Rossini meeting George again in Paris, once more dubbed him "the most extraordinary creature in Europe." One surmises that pecuniary reasons forbade the adoption of Hummel's wise counsel: be that as it may, on the Aspalls' return to England George went on tour in the North, beginning at Manchester, going through Bolton, Wigan, etc., to Newcastle, where he had an immense success. Next he proceeded to Edinburgh armed with no less than two hundred letters of introduction from friends and admirers at Newcastle! At his fourth concert in Edinburgh George was presented with a gold medal, and persuaded to give three more concerts, after which "the Ladies of Edinburgh" bestowed upon him another elaborate and ornate gold medal. Judging from the very attractive portrait of George which is prefixed to his posthumous works, one readily understands that the "romantic females" of the period would vow that his appearance was "vastly interesting." The young pianist's contemporary fame in Scotland is evidenced in an extract from Professor Wilson's "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*":

"North: . . . Have you heard Master Aspull, James?

"Shepherd: Weel, as sure's onything, Mr. North, yons a maist extraordinar' prodigy. He's music personified. His entire soul is in his ear, and you wee bit inspired hauns o' his mysteriously execute the bidding o' the genius within, and at aince delight and astonish."

Three successful concerts at Glasgow followed, hundreds of enthusiasts assembling to see George off when he left for Dublin. After a series of concerts at Cork, Limerick, etc., the boy returned to England. Concerts in the middle and West of England and a tour in South Wales completed the year 1827, and in the following year another Northern tour was undertaken. For a considerable time William and Joseph Aspull were associated with their younger brother, playing in piano-forte duets, or trios for harp and pianoforte, Joseph being a harpist.

In the programmes of concerts given by the brothers, William's compositions are in evidence, and George also appears as a composer, whilst from a newspaper cutting (from a private collection) of a performance of sacred music (held in the Roman Catholic Chapel, George Street, Nottingham), on December 27, 1880, we learn that he was a 'cellist—" Master George Aspull greatly aided the performance by his excellent playing on the principal violoncello." One is reminded of certain pianists of to-day by the insistence of George's " positively " or " absolutely " last appearance in Nottingham, which is announced on various occasions. As a specimen of the programmes submitted by the brothers Aspull, that given at the Exchange Concert Room, Nottingham, on February 2, 1881, is subjoined :—

PART I.

Glee - - - - - (No composer given.)
Master Geo., Master Joseph, and Mr. Wm. Aspull.

Grand Septet - - Grand Pianoforte,
Master Geo. Aspull.

This fine composition was brought out last season in London, by the Great Author, and also lately in Leeds by Master George Aspull at his Sixth Concert, under the patronage of the Most Noble Marchioness of Hertford. (With accompaniments.) - - - - -

Hummel.

Arietta - - - - - *Curioni.*
Master George Aspull.

Grand Duett - - Harp and Pianoforte - - - *Bochsa.*
Masters Geo. and Jos. Aspull.

Duett (Vocal) - - - - - *Rossini.*
Master Geo. and Mr. Wm. Aspull.

Grand Variations on " Robin Adair."

Grand Pianoforte, Master George Aspull, as played with the highest approbation before her Majesty Queen Adelaide, and at his concerts under the Patronage of the Most Noble the Marchioness of Mexboro', and received with the greatest enthusiasm. - - - - - *Piris.*

PART II.

Grand Fantasia - - - Harp - - - - - *Bochsa.*

Master Joseph Aspull.

Duett (Vocal) - - - (No title) - - - - - (No name.)

Master George and Mr. Wm. Aspull.

Grand Trio - Pianoforte, Violin and Violoncello.

Master Geo. Aspull, Mr. Thirlwall and Mr. Woolley.

This splendid and celebrated composition, dedicated to John Cramer, is distinguished as one of the finest and most important works of the Great Author, and was played in London with *Mori* and *Lindley*; also lately in Leeds by Master George Aspull and received with great enthusiasm - - - - - *Hummel.*

Song - - - "Oh, no, we never mention her" - - - *Bishop.*

Master George Aspull.

Duett - - - Harp and Pianoforte - - - *Bochsa.*

Master Jos. and Master Geo. Aspull.

Extempore Fantasia - Grand Pianoforte.

(Master George Aspull), which will be formed on any theme or themes that may be presented to him in the Room. In the course of his improvisation, he will introduce the characteristic movement, descriptive of a *Storm*, which was received at his late concerts with the highest approbation and enthusiasm.

In the last item is reflected the musical taste and standard of George Aspull's period.

When William Aspull accepted a country appointment—that of organist at St. Mary's, the Parish Church of Nottingham—the association of the brothers was of necessity broken, and Joseph's death shortly afterwards made the separation irrevocable. This event was a great sorrow to George, but he proceeded with his concerts, being made at Norwich once more the recipient of "a most valuable gold medal." From thence he went to Cambridge, and was so warmly received that he was persuaded to return later and give more concerts. For the third of these his first Concerto was composed: this was "so

greatly admired that it had to be repeated." On the same occasion George played Hummel's Concerto in B minor. Tidings of the death of Clementi induced the young pianist to attend the funeral, and to "the excessive cold and damp of the Abbey" Thomas Aspull attributed the chill which led to fatal results. George proceeded to Chesterfield, and thence to Newark, where he was extremely ill. Hearing that John Field was giving a concert in London, and that immediately afterwards Moscheles and Mendelssohn were to be heard, George insisted on going again to London, although he was advised not to travel. If the modern theory of open-air treatment for tuberculosis were infallible, George most certainly should have escaped his tragic fate: Thomas Aspull describes the youth driving himself from Newark to London in his open gig, drawn by "his favourite mare, who had attended him on his various tours of many thousand miles." After all his determined effort poor George was too ill to attend Moscheles' concert, and was taken to Tunbridge Wells, where two doctors saw him. Another journey to London followed, and more consultations, but no hope of recovery was given. Finally he was removed to Leamington, where on August 19, 1832, "without a struggle or a pang" he died. His body was taken to Nottingham, and he was buried in St. Mary's Church on August 24, the funeral being "attended by an immense concourse of people—at least a thousand." There is in the brief story of George Aspull's life a pathetic element; endowed with brilliant promise, lightly touched by an ephemeral fame, condemned at nineteen to the grave—and oblivion, since his name is barely remembered in the town of his birth and burial.

MURIEL SILBURN.

TRANSLATIONS OF SCHUMANN'S SONGS.

Op. 24. No. 6.

Warte, warte, wilder Schiffmann.
(Heine.)

Stay, hold hard, you hasty seadog;
Soon I'm off with you to sea;
[Soon, soon, soon]
First, goodbye to two fair maidens;
Europe's one, the other's She.

Blood my eyes shall weep for tear-
drops,
Blood start wildly from my veins,
Till I dip my pen in blood
And write with that my mortal
pains.

Come, dear, why to-day precisely
Are you shocked to see my blood?
Think how many a year before you
With a bleeding heart I stood!
Oh!

Sure, you know the ancient fable
Of the snake in Paradise,
How an apple brought our parents
Into all their miseries?

Apples always did the mischief!
Eve—her apple brought us death;
Eris—hers brought Troy a-fire;
You brought both things—fire and
death.

DUMINSTER CASTLE.

Op. 24. No. 8.

Anfangs wollt' ich.
(Heine.)

Could I ever hope to endure it?
Could I learn to bear it now?
Time alone, I thought, could cure it.
Time has cured; but ask not how!
K. B. W.

Op. 25. No. 5.

Schöne Wiege.
(Heine.)

Lovely cradle of all my sorrow,
Grave of all the peace I had,
Lovely town, I now must leave you:
Fare you well—and all is said.
Fare you well (bis).

Fare you well, you streets and alleys,
Where my love went to and fro,
And you path, where first my
footsteps
Strayed with hers, so long ago.
Fare you well (bis).

Oh! if I had never known thee,
Sovran heart and royal brow—
Never [never] then had I been fated
To be so unhappy now.

For thy love—I never sought it,
And thy heart—I left it free;
Only lingered by thee, happy
In that air that breathed on thee.

Yet 'tis thou that driv'st me from
thee.
Thine the words of bitter sound;
Madness throbs in all my being,
In my heart an aching wound,

And my limbs are faint and stumble,
Dragging [dragging] to their
journey's end,
Till at last the grave shall open
And receive me as a friend.

Lovely cradle, &c.

CHERRY BROOK.

Op. 25. No. 7.

Die Lotos-blume ängstigt.
(Heine.)

The lotus cowers and quivers
Under the sun's fierce light;
Bowing her head in silence,
She waits for the dreams of night.

For O, the moon's her lover,
She wakes from her sleep in his
rays,
And when he looks at her kindly,
She takes the veil from her face.

And blowing, glowing, kindling,
She gazes on him above,
The tears in her eyes are a-tremble
With love and the pain of love.

CHERRY BROOK.

Op. 25. No. 24.

Du bist wie eine Blume.
(Heine.)

Thou art a flower's image,
So fair, and pure, and kind,
I look on thee and sorrow
Steals through my wistful mind.

It seems as though a blessing
Arose and filled my heart,
A prayer that God possessing
Would keep thee as thou art.

ROLLO RUSSELL.

Reprinted by permission from
The Break of Day (Fisher, Unwin).

Op. 35. No. 3.

Wanderlied.
(J. Kerner.)

A drink to adventure!—then off and
away,
A kiss for my mother—too long I
delay,
Have done with entreaties—all argu-
ment's vain,
The world with its fever has gripped
me again!

A passion for movement I share with
the sun,
For he's been a rover since things
have begun;
The waves on the shingle, the wind
in the trees,
Am I more impatient and restless
than these?

The cloud up above me is rushing
along,
A lark far away lures me on with a
song,
All nature's conspiring my feet to
cajole,
For even the solid old earth's on the
roll!

The home and the friends that I'm
leaving behind,
Though soon out of sight never fade
out of mind,
The world in its beauty possesses
the art
Of conjuring images back to the
heart.

The wanderer welcomes the birds
that he knows,
His sweetheart he sees when he
passes a rose.
O fortunate fellow, wherever you
roam,
Affection and memory build you a
home! (bis)

A drink to adventure!—then off and
away,
A kiss for my mother—too long I
delay,
Have done with entreaties, all argu-
ment's vain,
The word with its fever has gripped
me again! (bis)

LUCIA YOUNG.

Op. 35. No. 4.

Erstes Grün.
(J. Kerner.)

You gleam of grass, you boughs in
bud
Stir mortal hearts with quick'ning
blood.
Mine that has lain in wintry gloom
Leaps to behold the year's young
bloom.

Green hope that decks our ancient
earth,
New laughing life, I greet your
birth—
Kneel in the woodland's lonely
glade,
Press to my lips a tender blade.

You lure me forth from ways of
men—
Oh, make my spirit whole again.
Be healing balm; for pity's sake
Still in my heart th' unceasing ache.

R. CAPELL.

Op. 36. No. 4.

An den Sonnenschein.
(R. Reinick.)

Oh, jolly sun! oh, jolly sun!
What wonders to my heart you've
done!

For now that you've come bursting
out,
You make me want to sing and
shout!

No longer moping here I'll stay,
At love once more I mean to play,
And when I step outside to see,
A tempting sight you offer me—
A laughing group of lovely girls!—
Oh, shameless sun! you seem to think
That you need only beam and wink
To snatch a kiss from any flower
That takes your fancy by the hour!
Though less mature in years than
you,

I know that's not the thing to do.
Contented I must be with one—
Oh, lucky sun! oh, lucky sun!

LUCIA YOUNG.

Op. 39. No. 5.

Es war als hätt' der Himmel.
(*J. v. Eichendorff.*)

I saw how heaven descended,
And earth received his kiss,
Turned in her sleep, and mingled
Her quiet dreams with his.

The breezes sent their message
All down the cornfields light,
The forest whispered, dying
Into the silent night.

My soul in love expanded
Under the starry dome,
Sped o'er the sleeping valleys,
As birds speed flying home.
F. S. W.

Op. 39. No. 12.

Übern Garten durch die Lüfte.
(*J. v. Eichendorff.*)

Overhead I heard the swallows
Northward flying yester e'en;
Spring is here, and Summer follows,
Look! the earth's already green.

Can it be! I leap for gladness—
Can it be! I cry in pain;
So it comes, the charmed sadness
With the moonlight once again.

From the stars the words I fashion
And the whispering of the vine
And the nightingale's fierce
passion—

"Thine the maiden, she is thine."
DUMINSTER CASTLE.

Op. 51. No. 2.

Volksliedchen.
(*F. Rückert.*)

When I wait in the garden early
(Wearing a pea-green hat),
There is one thing I think of—
"What is my William at?"
No star that shines in heaven
To him I could refuse,
My heart's already given
To play with if he choose.

When I wait in the garden early
(Wearing a pea-green hat),
There is one thing I think of—
"What is my William at?"
Yes, the one thing I think of—
"My William—what's he at?"
LUCIA YOUNG.

Op. 79. No. 13.

Marienwürmchen.

(*Aus des Knaben Wunderhorn.*)
Please won't you settle on my hand,
O ladybird, dear ladybird?

You know I'd never harm you!
No, never harm you!

I only want to see your wings,
They are such attractive speckly
things,
I'll do nothing to alarm you.

Oh spread your wings and fly away,
Poor ladybird, poor ladybird,
I see your house is burning,
Quick! Quick! it's burning,
There's danger brewing, mark my
words,

For all the little ladybirds
And it's time you were re-
turning.

So take them all to the house next
door,

Poor ladybird, poor ladybird,
The children will befriend you,
Yes, they'll befriend you,
I'm sure they'd like to see your
wings

(They are such attractive speckly
things),
So tell them that I send you!
LUCIA YOUNG.

Op. 127. No. 2.

Dein Angesicht.
(*Heine.*)

So fair art thou, so full of grace,
In dreams I see thy angel-face.
So dear art thou, past all belief,
And yet so pale, so full of grief.
VIOLET SHAW.

Those rosy lips that yet draw breath
Soon will receive the kiss of death,
And soon the light of heaven will die
Now kindled in that faithful eye.
K. B. W.

Op. 142. No. 2.

Lehn' deine Wang'!
(*Heine.*)

Here, eye to eye, our falling tears
Shall mingle with one another;
Here, heart to heart, our hopes and
fears
Shall break into flame together.

The flame of hope shall dry away
The mounting tears of sorrow;
And here to my heart I'll hold you
to-day
Though I should die to-morrow.
F. S.

Several others have been received,
including three complete sets of the
Dichterliebe, for one of which it is
hoped that space may be found in
the next number, together with some
of Hugo Wolf. We welcome a new
name among the translators in this
number, and hope for more like her
four from others.—[Ed.]

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A Musical Tour Through the Land of the Past. By Romain Rolland.

Translated by Bernard Miall. Kegan Paul.

This book, the original of which was reviewed in an earlier number (January, 1921), now appears in a really excellent translation—so good that after reading the book all through, it has seemed at every moment like an original itself. We have, also, the quotations from Pepys now given in full instead of the references only, an important improvement. It is an extraordinarily faithful picture that we get by this means of the uncritical, easy-going Englishman, and we cannot doubt its verisimilitude when it is gathered only from a diary, and that in cipher. And the next chapter is just as illuminating; why is it, we ask ourselves, that the Continent have neglected while we have prized Handel, and that now, when we have in the last few decades taken music more seriously, we begin to think less of him; and why does M. Rolland make more of the man than of the musician? Can it be that our critical powers were at fault here too? Do we ever make any clear and real distinctions at all, even in diaries? These are narrow thoughts; let us put them away.

M. Rolland has another moral, "The axis of the earth sticks up visibly," to adapt Heine's phrase, in every country of Europe. And Mr. Huberman told us the other day (April, 1921) that in his travels he had found it still doing so. Though we may all have different views as to which was the most musical nation, we should probably all agree that Germany was the second most musical at the time of which M. Rolland is speaking. To be second in *everyone's* estimation but, or perhaps including, one's own is a proud position; and he protests that he does not belittle the greatness of the classic German art at the close of the eighteenth century, when he points out how much it owed to foreign influences and elements. Shall we take this moral to heart? Shall we go on crying, "We are the music-makers," or shall we call ourselves cosmopolitans and admit that we are the clearing-house of the world, and that if ever there is a truly British music it will be based on a critical study of foreign elements? These are larger thoughts; let us weigh them.

Els madrigals i la missa de difunts d'en Brudieu. By Felip Pedrell.
Barcelona.

Joan Brudieu was a Frenchman who came in 1538 to Urgel, a cathedral city at the junction of two passes over the Pyrenees through Andorra. He sang there that year at Christmas and was appointed choirmaster next year, whence we may argue to his birth in the second decade of the sixteenth century. He kept that post, with a few intermissions, until his death in 1591. Hence he was the contemporary

of Morales, he came to Urgel when Vittoria was born, and he died three years before Palestrina and di Lasso.

The book before us contains a *Missa pro defunctis*, from a clearly-written manuscript at Urgel; the four parts are on a double page of folio, and internal evidence shows the MS. to belong to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but nothing as to the date of the mass itself. There are also sixteen madrigals in several stanzas, some repeating the music, others set continuously. They are from part books well printed in Barcelona in 1585, of which the copy here used is in the Escorial and unique. The mass and the madrigals together fill 244 pages of Don Pedrell's book. The original clefs are used; the usual number of parts is four; these are peppered over, no doubt by the singers, with sharps and a few flats, which the editor has contradicted in brackets.

The interest of this publication lies in the fact that Brudieu remained, like Cabezon and Guerrero, in Spain, that he wrote madrigals, and that his name is unknown to the musical dictionaries, including Eitner. Morales and Vittoria, on the other hand, though they had ties with Seville, spent their lives and practised their art at Rome; neither of them wrote madrigals, and Morales's principles would not allow him to. In Brudieu's madrigals there is little of the inspired counterpoint of di Lasso or of the versatility and suavity of the Italians, Donato and Ruffo, and later Zoilo and Striggio. They have hardly shaken themselves free of the Lydian mode of de la Hale and other conventions of the two preceding centuries; their technique is further advanced than Bruneau's and not so far as Claudin's, but at any rate it is of the school of Northern France that they remind us, rather than of the Italians who had been, or of the English who were coming to be. The melody is a little conventional, perhaps, within its peculiar mould; one which begins "*Festinant l'amor*" is pointed and concise.

The Orchestra. By G. F. Malipiero. Chester.

The author has an uncanny skill in putting his finger on the point in a few words. Debussy's genius and Ravel's craft, Debussy's inventive selection, Stravinsky's economy and Scriabin's and Strauss's pomposities are all touched lightly but firmly. Wagner's heights and depths are plumbed, and he is tacitly thanked for having shown us that the human voice is "the greatest enemy of the music drama." But the book is by no means a mere canonization of the moderns, though that is the most interesting part. M. Malipiero knows how much we do and don't know about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he has considered and appraised what Rousseau taught, and he does not underrate Beethoven's contribution. There is much wisdom in 38 pages.

The translation is poor. "Sonority" and "sonorities" are words which always leave us gasping, because we never know whether they are intended to translate "chord" or "timbre" or "orchestration," and we sometimes doubt whether the writer knows. Such a phrase as "the innovators (of the orchestral technique of the symphony) were encircled by an iron girder" is a metaphor which the mind positively refuses to grasp. *Item*, you "deduct" a subtrahend and you "deduce" a conclusion. *Item*, we might say "irrecognizable," but we don't.

Guide du violiniste. By A. Baudet-Maget. Foetisch frères, Lausanne.

This is written by a professor of the Lausanne Conservatoire and is a most useful bit of spadework. Besides fiddlers, amateur and professional, it will interest all who care for and most of those who take part in chamber-music. There is a special list for the viola, and another list of books on the violin. Each department, from duos to sextets, is classified according to difficulty in eight different degrees. For every entry as many editions are given as the author knows. If kept up to date by supplements it will be extremely valuable.

Shanties. By George Marston. H. Horsnell and H. Roberts, Petersfield.

One welcomes another enthusiast for "Shanties," but one hardly sees why, except that paper and type are both good, it was thought worth while, in the face of the already existing half-dozen collections of many dozens, to print one dozen of the best known. If they were heard to the accompaniment of "the winds of the storm playing in the rigging as on a harp," one imagines that they could not have been very good shanties, or else that it could not have been a very good storm.

The Art of the Player-Piano. By Sydney Grew. Kegan Paul.

Great credit is due to Mr. Grew for being one of the first to face the problem of the player-piano, and to write a serious book about its possibilities; how serious only those who read it *all* will ever know, perhaps not even they! The opening chapters are devoted to an explanation of the mechanism and general working of the player-piano, but there are no hints as to the proper choice of an instrument, nor is the crucial matter touched on, of making the action as sensitive as possible by weakening the springs, which in some types of player largely control the relationship between the thrust of the pedals and the resulting tone. There are helpful suggestions as to pedalling and the use of the tempo lever, as well as the controls that serve to accentuate the melody. On the whole the claims made for the player-piano seem rather excessive, but this is perhaps only the right of the advocate and enthusiast.

The major portion of the book is taken up with a study of rhythm, and this is carried very far, too far, when it is stated that the fact that our week contains seven days is due to our "characteristic rhythmical sense." Surely no more than the Englishman's three meals a day are owing to his characteristic joy in ternary rhythm. Rhythm is of vital importance in music as it is in all the arts; rhythm is the dance of Time; but the intricate and detailed translation of a vast number of poetical metres into musical terms seems beyond the mark. In a work that is educational we have a right to demand clear thought and lucid if not rhythmical expression; therefore, indignation becomes almost righteous when we meet sentences like, "Our playing is a matter of understanding what is wanted and of instinctively realising desires by the operation of a well-trained body, of which the more vital portion is the feet." We had always hoped, even when playing our pianola, that the more vital portion was the head.

H. W.

The Player-Piano Explained. By Harry Drake. Office of Musical Opinion.

This unpretentious little pamphlet does very well something very difficult to do, that is, to make clear to the uninitiated the working of a rather elaborate mechanism. It should be in the hands of every ambitious player-pianist who wishes to know, or ought to know, the whys and wherefores of the results which he hopes to obtain.

H. W.

English Organ Cases. By Andrew Freeman. Mate & Son.

It has often been said with some truth that the organist is not usually a very broad-minded, long-sighted type of musician. His sympathies do not carry far beyond his organ and church choir. He will play an organ conveying beautiful sounds to his hearers, whilst it never occurs to him that its appearance is meanwhile conveying ugliness to their eyes. He has not discovered, as Sir Hubert Parry had, that "the greater the capacity of mind for realising relations, the greater its scope." *

It is to be feared that many of the clergy are just as bad. They are ignorant of the first principles of art, whether in music, architecture, painting or sculpture. They have not learned that unless they offer the best available in all these things they are going against the teaching of Christ Himself when He accepted the gift of the precious box of ointment, instead of allowing it to be "sold for much and given to the poor."

If such people would only get hold of a few books like Mr. Freeman's it would be excellent for them. This little book of only 78 pages of letterpress, illustrated by 59 photographs and drawings, gives a clear description of all the pre-Restoration organ cases in the country, of practically all the cases of the famous Father Smith and Renatus Harris, built between 1660 and 1724, of most of those worthy of mention in the decadent period of the later Georges, and of the revival of the Gothic type due to the Oxford movement, finishing with a critical account of any present day organ cases where real merit and distinction has been achieved. The photographs and drawings have been chosen to illustrate types; those only receiving a description being cases closely resembling others.

The only criticisms occurring to one are these. Some of the photographs are taken from a point so far from the object, or at such an angle, or in such a light, that the details one is most anxious to see are indistinguishable. A glossary of technical architectural and other terms would not have occupied more than a couple of pages of small type, and would have made the book of more interest and use to those who do not understand such words as *pediment*, *ogee*, *diaper*, *brattished* and the like. At the same time, it is quite impossible for anyone to appreciate or criticise an organ case, or its suitability for any church, or a particular position in that church, without some knowledge of architecture. Descriptions of works of art, even where they are as clear and terse as Mr. Freeman's, cannot conjure up a picture in the mind of the reader at all worthy of the thing described. There might have

* "Pages from the Notebooks of Hubert Parry." *Music and Letters*, October, 1920.

been more criticism and not so much description, and when criticism was offered, either adverse or favourable, more cogent reasons for it might have been stated. The things the reader wants to discover are what is good, what is bad, and why.

Now that we are once more beginning to express ourselves sincerely through art, now that democracy is beginning "to correct the false estimate of art as an appanage of luxury" (again I quote from Parry), is it too much to hope that organ cases may be built and adorned by the loving hands of the congregation themselves under skilled direction just as churches once were? Mr. Freeman shows that, when the church got slack and luxurious, organ cases were built with clumsy lines and disfigured by badly executed carving. We have improved on that state of things to-day. The next stage is to have not only music but also wood carving and even building by the people for the people. But this is anticipating the Millennium!

E. C. B.

L'Art du Chant en France. By Théodore Gérold. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg.

This is a book by a scholar rather than a musician—at least, musical points do not leap out by the way as they did when Parry treated of France in the 17th century in the third volume of the Oxford History. It spends (wastes?) time over the definition of terms (*Air de cour*, *récit*, *chanson*), rather as Monro collected all the references to the modes in Greek writers, instead of giving us complete instances of them or telling us about the kind of occasion and place where they were sung, compass of singers, accompaniment, and so on. Yet the accuracy of the book, its careful bibliography and research generally, make it useful to a musician. It is the period of the rise of homophony, and we have reached now a not dissimilar period. The state of musical man has just suffered the nature of a (harmonic) insurrection, and we are wondering what to be at with song—whether to drown it by instruments, or deprive it of words, or thin the accompaniment to a single fiddle, or leave it unaccompanied; and singers, with us, are forgetting what singing can really be, and how long and what self-sacrifice it takes to make it so. The French problem was different. They had to devise a plan for making continuous melody interesting as a substitute for the different interest of woven polyphonic melodies. Their problem was accentuated but eventually solved by the invasion of Italian *bel canto* and by their own passion for the beauty of the spoken word, which two things in combination led on to Lully's famous recitative. We do not prize our language as we should, and shall never work out a solution on the lines of recitative; but we believe we have the best lyric poetry of any nation, and the sooner we treat our songs as lyrics again the better.

Musical Portraits. By Paul Rosenfeld. Kegan Paul.

These reprints from periodicals contain much sound criticism and some pages of good writing. The articles on Moussorgsky, Liszt, Berlioz, Debussy, Ravel and Scriabine, are as good expositions as words can hope to give of tones. Each seizes on what is pertinent with the first few sentences and develops it relentlessly until the picture stands clearly before us. The author leaves no doubt as to his view,

and even when it is the view " of all sensible people " yet manages to print on it his own sign-manual. The method is cumulative; there are the pencillings of Theophrastus rather than the clean stroke of Hazlitt. One suffers at times under the load of words, and especially of epithets. Some of these hit the mark in a way that produces a thrill; a few are more deliberately chosen—"magistral" and "frenetic"—and attract attention so much that we shudder at each recurrence. That is the worst of reprints; a writer cannot be expected to remember that he used that word ten pages back, *i.e.*, a year ago. There is not one of the articles, on twenty different composers, from which one may not learn something, and one never quite knows where it will be to be found. The style is light and firm, and has often a musical ring. The author knows his music well and knows a good many other things besides. The names to which most readers will turn first are Stravinsky, Mahler, Reger, Schönberg, Sibelius, Löffler, Ornstein and Bloch.

National Opera Handbooks. ("Parsifal" and "The Mastersingers.")

By A. Corbett-Smith. Grant Richards.

These shilling's-worths, to fit into the waistcoat pocket, are intended to put an opera-goer into the right mood for the evening, rather than to tell him the story, and to give one or two hints as to what to listen for in the music. We think they achieve both their purposes for anyone who knows nothing of the opera and will spend ten careful minutes on the handbook, and will then forget about it and attend to what he sees and hears. But they do tell, incidentally, as much of the story as he need know if he does not allow himself to be put off by the "bright" narrative.

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